BING

AUGUST 1993

No. 104

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

Founded 1950

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The marvellously evocative photograph on the cover shows Bing on the set of "Rhythm on the Range" in 1936 with the young Gary Crosby (then aged 3). What youth and vigour in Bing's face and what hopes and aspirations he must have had then for his young son. The photograph was supplied and by Don Haizelden to whom we give grateful thanks.

CONTENTS

	Page No's.
Editorial	2
Secretary/Treasurer's Report	3
Letter from Leslie	4
Bing on Laserdisc	6
Trading Post	8
Celluloid Crosby	10
"You'll Never Guess Who Just Walked In"	14
Bing In The USA	17
Bob Machliss — A Remembrance	17
Memo from Machliss	18
One Sweet Letter From You	19
Lionel's Lines — "I'll Never Find the Words"	23
Once In A While	26
Bing On TV — The Middle Years	26
The Way We Were	31
Bert Bishop's Bing On The Box	32
One More Sunrise	34
Derek Parkes' Crosby Collectors Club	36
CD Reviews	44

Membership renewals fall due on 1 January on each year, and should be sent, together with remittance to Michael Crampton at the address shown opposite. Subscription rates effective 1 January 1993 are:

UK	£7.00 per annum
Europe, inc Eire	£8.00 per annum
USA & Canada	$20 per annum
Australia	A$30 per annum
New Zealand & South America	£11.50 per annum

All remittances should be paid in £ sterling, payable to "Michael Crampton — ICC" with the exception of U.S. and Canadian members who should send their remittance in U.S. dollars to F. Wiggins and Australian members who should pay David Currington. For addresses see inside front cover.
All articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to Malcolm Macfarlane.
Any other correspondence concerning membership or other aspects of club affairs should be sent to Michael Crampton.

BING is the official journal of the International Crosby Circle and is published in April, August and December of each year.

Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC. All original material © ICC 1993.

EDITORIAL

There have been many favourable developments on the Bing scene since the last edition. In the UK, the 90th anniversary of Bing's birth generated many tributes in the media and in particular it is appropriate to mention the marvellous Alan Dell testimonial. To have an hour of prime time radio devoted to Bing on a national radio network was quite something. Alan presented songs from all periods of Bing's career utilising the Musical Autobiography links before the original versions of the songs. He also gave us a preview of the alternate take of "Change Partners" now issued on the Ken Barnes CD "How Lucky Can You Get". Further afield in New York, we read of a Bing Crosby Festival Weekend at which several jazz groups played Bing's hits ranging from "Out Of Nowhere" to "True Love" to celebrate his birthday.

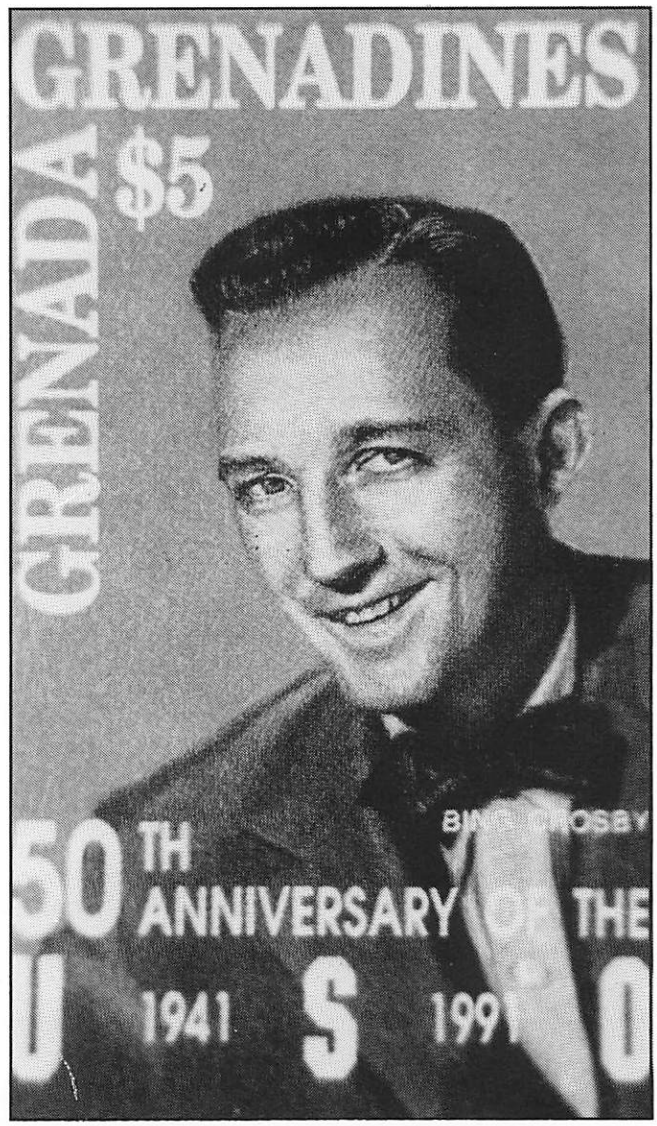
Rosemary Clooney herself has done us the great honour of joining our club and you will read in Trading Post of the re-issue of Bing's autobiography "Call Me Lucky". Several CDs have been issued and there is news of even more to come. There's a video on the horizon and you will find a fascinating article about Bing on laserdisc in this edition by none other than Ken Barnes. If the USA has been slow to issue a Bing stamp, Grenada has certainly not and we reproduce a blown up version of their postage stamp alongside this editorial. It's all happening!

Another development which may have a beneficial effect on our collecting activities involves the price of CDs. It seems that we pay far more for our CDs over here than many other countries. The UK government has therefore set up an enquiry into the price of compact discs. The investigation will not be completed until April 1994 but here's hoping that we see a price reduction.

Incidentally, my apologies for the slightly late arrival of the last issue. As we had received some useful donations, we decided to utilise the money on some extra pages for BING and these took a little longer to be processed by all concerned. Many nice comments have been received about BING 103 and thank you for these. It is only fair to say that we shall not be able to repeat the size of the last issue all the time unless the funds permit it.

Finally, two important announcements. A separate advert about the annual Leeds meeting is included in the magazine but don't forget the earlier than usual date of September 26th. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at Leeds. Secondly, I've moved house. The new address is shown inside the front cover.

Malcolm Macfarlane



Bing Crosby Historical Society

Ken Twiss has advised us that the papers and other historical materials of the BCHS were given to Cowles Rare Book Library of Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington on June 2nd 1993. This enables the materials to become a permanent part of the Bing Crosby Collection at Gonzaga University. Sadly the BCHS has now been dissolved but thankfully much of their work over many years will be preserved at Gonzaga. Under the leadership of Ken Twiss the BCHS achieved a great deal and Ken has certainly earned a well deserved rest.

CASSETTE OFFERS

1. Bing on TV — The Middle Years

A C90 audio cassette containing songs from Bing's TV appearances in the 1960s is available from George Harwood, 5 Glebe Road, Hemingford, Grey, Huntingdon, Cambs PE18 9DS. Price £3.50 inc. p. & p. to UK members. The ICC will receive £1 for each cassette sold.

This is a companion issue to the article in BING 104. The first article in the series was "The Early Days" in BING 103 and the final one will be "The Final Curtain'. Companion cassettes for each article are available now from George. Same price or £10 for all three if ordered at the same time.

2. One More Sunrise

A C60 audio cassette linking in with Ken Crossland's article in the current issue is also available from George Harwood. This contains two taped messages from Michael Holliday to Stan White together with the recording of Bing's session at the studios on 15th October 1960. Cost £2.75. The ICC will receive 50p. Address as above.

3. Elusive Bing — Volume Two

Following the listing of the English 78s in BING 102, Don and Peter Haizelden put together a cassette of rarer 78s. This has proved popular with members and Volume Two is now ready. The tracks are:

Without A Word Of Warning (1951): The Four Winds and the Seven Seas: A Bluebird Singing In My Heart: Conchita Marquita Lopez: With This Ring, I Thee Wed: The Iowa Indian Song: Why Can't You Behave: Feudin' and Fightin': Just A Prayer Away: Jim, Johnny and Jonas: This Is The Time: Till The End Of The World: Tarra Ta-lara Ta-lar: Till The Clouds Roll By: Lullaby Land: The Friendly Islands: Helpless: Home Cookin': The Teddy Bear's Picnic: The Best Thing For You: The Girl Friend: Silver Threads Among The Gold: Memories: Why Do I Like You: La Seine: Just a Little Lovin': Tenderfoot: When The Sun Goes Down: A Perfect Day: Farewell.

Cost £3.50. Write to Don Haizelden, Brunswick House, 12 Park Lane, Long Sutton, Lincs PE12 9DH. The ICC will receive £1 for each cassette sold. Specify whether Dolby required when ordering. Volume One remains available. Same price.

ROSEMARY CLOONEY BECOMES AN HONORARY MEMBER

Rosemary Clooney has graciously accepted an honorary membership in the ICC. We are very pleased to have her support, and her participation in the ICC's worldwide efforts to keep Bing's memory and musical legacy alive.

As members know, Rosemary Clooney sang frequently with Bing on the radio, recorded two highly-regarded albums with him ("Fancy Meeting You Here" in 1958, and "That Travelin' Two-Beat' in 1964), and co-starred with Bing in the annual holiday favourite, "White Christmas", in 1954. She also appeared with Bing during his concert stage performances in the United States and Britain in 1976 and 1977, including those at the London Palladium which many ICC members were privileged to attend.She also recorded a tribute album to Bing, "Rosie Sings Bing", on the Concord Jazz Label in 1978.

Our U.S. representative, F.B. "Wig" Wiggins, recently sent Rosemary copies of the ICC-published discography **BING — JUST FOR THE RECORD,** the first two volumes of **THE CROSBY COLLECTION,** and recent issues of BING, in connection with her membership in the ICC. We all extend a very warm welcome to her, and we look forward to receiving further information about her current musical activities for inclusion in forthcoming issues of BING.

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT

Greetings to all our members and may I thank all those who wrote expressing support for our enlarged April issue. Malcolm is to be congratulated on his fine debut but I must echo Malcolm's words as we cannot always extend the privilege of 50 pages in every issue.

It is a pleasure to report that renewals have been high for 1993 and we are delighted to welcome the following new members:-

UNITED KINGDOM

Mrs. Lynda Heasman (Essex), Barry Adams (Co. Down), Tony Barber (Surrey), Robert MacLaren (Liverpool), Douglas Le Vick (Bucks)

Barry is an old friend of the ICC and it is good to see him back in the fold whilst Douglas is an executive member of the Glenn Miller Society and members will be aware of the mutual interest that Crosby and Miller enthusiasts share.

UNITED STATES AND CANADA

Wig's success story continues with the introduction of 14 new members for 1993 and we extend a warm hand to:-

Jim Allen (Newark, California), Robert Berger (Brooklyn, New York), Rev. David Burgess (St. Paul, Minnesota), Barbara Fisher (New York), Stephen Horan (St. Paul, Minnesota), Jennifer Jablonski (Franklin Square, New York), David Lobosco (Glenshaw, Pennsylvania), Eddie Rice (Bend, Oregon), Harvey Sheirr (New York), Michael Strada (Bronx, New York), Charles Vincent (Sunnyvale, California), Rev. Paul Walsh (Smithtown, New York), Dave O'Dell (Edmonton, Alberta) and Vincent Pietroniro (La Salle, Quebec).

Eddie Rice is a lifetime supporter of Crosby enthusiasts and many will recall his friendship with Bing and Johh Scott Trotter, the latter enabling Eddie to bring the Kraft Music Hall to them via his fabulous tapes. Welcome Eddie.

DEATHS

Sadly we must report the passing of three more stalwart members, Bob Machliss, John Colvill and Raymond Thompson.

Bob was President of The Victorian Bing Crosby Society and his death at a young age is a great shock to all who knew him. It was an honour to deal with Bob on matters Crosby and a full tribute by Keith Parkinson appears on another page. We extend our condolences to Janet and family.

John joined the ICC in late 1992 and thus had no time in which to share his love of Bing with us but we are aware from May Colvill that John derived great pleasure from listening to his Bing recordings and one of his favourites was played at his funeral.

Raymond Thompson was a staunch Bing admirer and a regular visitor to Leeds. Our condolences go out to his wife and family.

Just as the above was written Irene Ashurst of Wigan rang to inform us that her husband Frank had died on the 3rd June. Frank and Irene were regular visitors to Leeds in the early days and we have very happy memories of their contributions to the fun of those early meetings.

Another great human being has been claimed and we extend our thoughts to Irene, John, Paul and family at this sad time. Frank loved Bing's recording of THINE

ALONE and we urge you to take down your copy and play it now in tribute to a great guy.

DONATIONS
We are indebted to the following members who have given generously in support of club funds.

Ian Patience, F.J. Thompson, Ragnar Uppman, Ron McCormick, David Newbold, Lars Schinnerling, Jim Reilly, Ron Holder, Maurice Downes, Len Nuttall, R.J. Cane, Joe Cain, Greg Marshall, Fred Dolby and Boy Newhouse.

HOOLE'S GUIDE
Adwalton Publishing have produced the first ever guide to British Collecting Clubs and members who are interested can obtain the softbound book for £8.70 from

Adwalton Publishing
14 Penfield Road
Drighlington
Bradford BD11 1ES
WEST YORKSHIRE

Please mention ICC when writing.

TREASURE ISLAND
Richard Hart's debut CD is a collector's dream and in my opinion it joins Ken's EP Collection as being one of the best CD's yet produced for good sound and collecting interest.

The tracks are well balanced, sound mellow and it is worth buying the disc just to hear 'So Do I'. We strongly urge members to support this issue for if it is successful, more will follow. Well done Richard.

Finally, can I thank all members for their support, loyalty and interest and I look forward to your company on SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 26 AT LEEDS.

Michael Crampton

Letter from Leslie

Our comment that Leslie might not contribute to every issue in future led many people to write to him to see if he was ill! As you will read, he has again responded to public demand by producing his usual update on the Crosby scene.

The arrival of the last issue of BING had me carrying out my usual routine of hurriedly opening the envelope and digesting all the interesting contents. When the magazine drops through the letter box it has a 'hold' on me as I guess it does on all other members. So a grateful thanks to all those whose efforts and dedication ensure that we are in receipt of such a fine journal.

Last May, I was extremely pleased with the radio tributes in conjunction with what would have been Bing's 90th birthday as this is the medium whereby Bing's memory can more easily be kept before the general public. Judging by the mail received and also telephone calls, it is evident the membership were very pleased with the programme put together by the veteran and celebrated broadcaster Alan Dell. That the broadcast is now a treasured part of members 'Crosby Memorabilia' is quite understandable, and I go along with all those who recognise that Alan Dell does much for Bing's memory and who hold him in high regard.

In my part of Britain, down here in Southern England, there are two other radio presenters who are 'Bing men', to the core. I refer to my good friends, Gerry Didymus of BBC Radio Solent, Southampton, and Ken Gladstone-Millar of South Coast Radio, Fareham. Both these gentlemen put together their own tributes to commemorate Bing's 90th Birthday date and their respective broadcasts were met with much approval from the locals. As a result of the various tributes, I was amazed by the number of people who stopped me in the street or shouted across the road with a wave of the hand to say that they had lapped up the broadcasts.

My own Bing plugging activities have had mixed results over recent months. The GMTV people came down to my home to prepare an item to go out on Bing's birth date and in all they spent over 3 hours with me. It was planned to use the material on May 4th but in the end, a 2 minute item went out on May 5th at 6.47 a.m.! I was more successful with a periodical called Mature Tymes which did a piece on me in April. There were a few mistakes in it but it all helps to keep Bing's name in the public eye.

In this life of ours, one has to go along and listen to the opinion of others on any given subject, but when reading the letter from member Clive Menadue in the last issue of BING I suddenly felt that my hackles were rising. I noted that he mentioned the scarcity of Bing's recordings on BBC Radio and this statement really amazed me since Bing gets plenty of airings on the national network and indeed on many regional and local radio stations.

Can I ask Clive to join forces with the handful of us who keep in contact with the radio media people as listeners letters really do help shape radio policy. A point of view of mine is that Bing was really good all through his long career and as Bob Machliss so rightly conveyed in the last magazine, there were 'four stages of Bing'. In Bing's later years, the recordings of 'The Way We Were' and 'Time On My Hands' were to me

as good as anything done earlier. A lovely tonal sound is much in evidence on these tracks. Bing is in fine form on 'I Love To Dance Like They Used To Dance' and look how great he sounds on 'Children'.

I should imagine that member Clive's letter will have caused some upset among the membership but, as I say, we all have our opinions.

On page 25 of the April issue of BING, I enjoyed seeing the photograph of Bing with Jimmy Van Heusen and Sammy Cahn. I was immediately transported back to a day at Shepperton Film Studios in October 1961 when Bing caught me by surprise and suddenly said, "Would you like to meet the famous songwriters, Jimmy Van Heusen and Sammy Cahn?" As I shook their hands, I thanked them for writing two great songs for Bing to sing in recent films, namely "The Second Time Around" and "Incurably Romantic". I couldn't help noticing their facial expressions which were registering approval of a comment coming from an ordinary guy. I've mentioned before how I met Bob Hope at the same studios on another visit to see Bing. I still smile at the memory of this meeting. Bing said "Bob, meet Leslie Gaylor, a fan of mine from the Isle of Wight, an island about 60 miles away." Bob stood up and as we shook hands, he quipped, "I wish I had a fan club on an island" and quick as a flash, Bing retorted "Yeah Alcatraz."

I had a long telephone chat with Ken Barnes around the time of the issue of his new CD "How Lucky Can You Get". EMI were very pleased with the initial trade response and they got Fred Astaire's daughter, Ava, to give up some time to talk to the media about the new release. She was on TV on BBC's Pebble Mill and referred to it as her "favourite album". She also did several radio interviews which gave the release a healthy start and some useful exposure. Ken mentioned that he had done his best to bring Bing's voice "forward" but this was limited to some extent because Bing insisted at the time of the recording that he stood in front of the orchestra. Bing was at one microphone with Fred close by at another and unfortunately their voices "leaked" into each other's mike. If Ken had brought up Bing's voice, the volume level of the Orchestra would have been increased too much.

I was very pleased to receive the CD of "On Treasure Island" and for me it is a most impressive release as it gets away from the same handful of tracks that crop up regularly. I would like to extend my own thanks and gratitude to JSP Records, Richard Hart, Derek Parkes and John McNicholas for their fine enterprise and initiative which brought the CD into being. I was delighted also by the superb notes by Fred Reynolds. If Richard Hart can get another volume issued, it would be marvellous.

It is common knowledge among Bing fans, that he was very adept at unscripted repartee. Recently I was looking through some old newspapers and re-read a report of Bing meeting up with singer Engelbert Humperdinck. This was to discuss if the singer could appear on the Hollywood Palace with Bing. When Engelbert was introduced by name, Bing replied "What's that? A castle on the Rhine?"

There is now more definite news of the new CD featuring Bing and Rosemary Clooney. Details as supplied by Jasmine Records are shown below.

Hey' Look Us Over!

Bing Crosby and Rosemary Clooney, singing in duet, accompanied by the Buddy Cole Trio, with linking dialogue spoken by, Bing, Rosemary, Buddy, and announcer, George Fenneman

ISN'T THIS A LOVELY DAY. — *Irving Berlin*
ANYTHING YOU CAN DO. — *Irving Berlin*
THEY SAY IT'S WONDERFUL. — *Irving Berlin*
AIN'T WE GOT FUN. — *Richard Whiting*
LET'S TAKE A WALK AROUND THE BLOCK — *George/Ira Gershwin*
SUMMERTIME — *George/Ira Gershwin*
LETS CALL THE WHOLE THING OFF. — *George/Ira Gershwin*
PEOPLE WILL SAY WE'RE IN LOVE — *Rodgers/Hammerstein*
LOVER, (Buddy Cole multi tracked solo piano with the trio) — *Richard Rodgers*
HEY, LOOK ME OVER, (from Wild Cat).
LET'S PUT OUT THE LIGHTS — *Herman Hupfeld*
THEY CAN'T TAKE THIS AWAY FROM ME. — *George/Ira Gershwin*
EVERYTIME I SEE YOU I'M IN LOVE AGAIN (Buddy Cole Trio) — *Buddy Cole*
PARIS MEDLEY:
ANY TOWN IS PARIS WHEN YOU'RE YOUNG — *Trotter/Adair*
PARIS IN THE SPRING — *Gordon/Revel*
THE LAST TIME I SAW PARIS — *Hammerstein II/Kern*
APRIL IN PARIS (quote for finale) — *Duke/Harburg.*

The Buddy Cole Trio (including multi-instrumental and added effects, engineered by Buddy Cole in his home studio)

Buddy Cole ... ... Piano and Hammond Organ
Vince Terri ... ... Guitar
Dick Whitaker ... ... String Bass
Nick Fatool ... ... Drums

Originally recorded for radio, at the CBS Studios in Hollywood and Produced by Murdo McKenzie.

Radio Announcer: George Fenneman.

Time: 41.18 minutes.

Source: "Navy Swings" (Transcriptions).

It was Ken Gladstone-Millar of South Coast Radio who first alerted me to the planned release as he had received a call from his friend Mike Hazeldine of Jasmine Records in which the acquisition of the rights to the material was mentioned. I then wrote to Mike Hazeldine suggesting that our own Stan White would be a good man to write the sleeve notes as he had met Buddy Cole and also corresponded with him (and subsequently his widow) over the years. This suggestion was accepted and Stan has now written the notes. I am alerting Jasmine Records to the vast amount of radio material available for CD issue if they wish to do some follow up releases.

Leslie Gaylor

BING ON LASERDISC

It is with great pleasure that we welcome Ken Barnes to the pages of BING with an article describing the latest technical development competing for our spare money.

Most members of ICC, I imagine, own a video recorder and many of them, I am sure, have managed to collect a hefty number of Bing's films. Tape, however, has many shortcomings being subject to drop-out (both audio and video) as well as being perishable. In recent years the advent of the laserdisc has become the chosen preference of film buffs. It is the most perfect form of video reproduction since it brings you not only the best picture but also the kind of sound quality offered by CD.

If the laser disc can be said to have a shortcoming, it's the fact that it is a playback-only system. This has obviously hampered its commercial progress to a certain extent — but the market has never stopped growing. In fact, in Japan over the last three years more films have been sold on disc than on tape. In America where tape still dominates, the laser continues to grow in popularity and the current catalogue contains around 7,000 titles. Just about every major film there ever was can be obtained on laser — and that includes a healthy amount of Crosby.

If it seems that MCA have not always done right by Bing as far as his recordings are concerned, they are certainly giving his films a good showing on laserdisc.

Worth noting is the superb release of A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT. O.K., most of you have got it on tape. But the excellent print used for this disc yields a picture of unparalleled perfection and the digitally remastered soundtrack has a richness that the BBC version can only hint at. The great thing about laserdiscs is that they operate on the same principal as CDs. It's possible to go straight into your favourite portion of any film or programme at the touch of a button without all that laborious spooling back and forth that comes with tape. The songs on "Yankee" are all chaptered allowing this kind of instant access.

HOLIDAY INN is also worth seeing on laser. The soundtrack has not been given the digital treatment but it's still better than any VHS version and all of the songs are separately chaptered — again providing instant selection of your preferred musical moments.

GOING MY WAY, however, is a disappointment. This time MCA have not managed to find a good print and both picture and sound quality are below par (about the same quality as you would get on VHS). A laserdisc — being the best known form of video reproduction — is only as good as the material it presents. Thus, any flaws in the material are doubly noticeable when transferred to laser. And while GOING MY WAY is lousy compared with other laser discs, it does at least carry a bonus — the film's theatrical trailer.

HERE COMES THE GROOM is also available in what I am told is a quite reasonable print which has been given the digital treatment. I haven't seen this one so can't make any comment.

WHITE CHRISTMAS — the first film to be shot in VistaVision is available in two versions. The first, issued about 5 years ago — but still available, is an "enhanced stereo" non-digital treatment. Not genuine stereo (because the VistaVision frame made no allowance for stereo facility) but the sound is certainly not objectionable and is brighter and cleaner than any VHS tape. The optional version referred to as "letter-box" was issued about a year ago and offers the film in its original aspect ratio with nothing cropped off at the sides leaving black bars at the top and bottom of the TV picture. And I must say I much prefer this. The soundtrack also has been digitally re-mastered in its original glorious mono — and is a decidedly warmer sound. Both versions, of course, can be recommended. As the saying goes "You pays yer money . . ."

The Crosby charisma pops up in several other laserdisc releases. Expectedly in THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT and THAT'S ENTER-TAINMENT II. And unexpectedly in the Criterion label's special edition of SINGIN' IN THE RAIN. On this disc there is a supplementary section which features clips of the songs as they were originally performed — and we get a film clip of Bing singing "Beautiful Girl" from GOING HOLLYWOOD. Another unexpected treat occurs in the MGM/UA release of two early Fred Astaire musicals DANCING LADY/ROBERTA presented on two discs. As a curtain raiser to the first film, MGM/UA have dug into their vaults and included the entire 1934 ten-minute short STAR NIGHT AT THE COCONUT GROVE presented in dazzling early technicolour. About halfway through we see a youthful and slightly plump Bing chatting with Mary Pickford and western star Johnny Mack Brown before giving out with a soulful version of "With Every Breath I Take."

The Crosby/Astaire connection continues — again unexpectedly — on Paramount's laserdisc Wide-screen edition of Fred's 1957 film "FUNNY FACE". After the end credits on this disc, Paramount have added the theatrical trailer of WHITE CHRISTMAS (reportedly one of their best-selling laserdiscs).

With all these goodies available (at the moment only in the USA) you're probably thinking "This is all very well — but what does it cost?" Well, for top results you really need a multi-standard TV. But even if you don't have a multi-standard set, the current Pioneer laserdisc player CLD 1750 can solve your problem. This popular model is currently selling like hot cakes at

£550. If this seems a lot, take a look at the machine and find out what it offers you. It can play laser discs in PAL (the British standard) and NTSC (the American and Japanese standard) even on a regular British TV set. AND it is also a superb CD player.

As for the laser discs, these are readily available from scores of specialist shops up and down the country. Prices start from around £35 each. But it is cheaper to import them personally from American distributors who generally offer a 10% discount. Even with the cost of import duty and postal charges, the average disc works out around £10 cheaper than buying from local suppliers. If you feel that the excellence of the laser disc is not a good enough reason for replacing your Crosby tapes with the disc versions, let me now draw your attention to a recently released item that presents HIGH SOCIETY as it's never been seen or heard before.

Last year MGM/UA created a page of laser history by releasing a unique version of HIGH SOCIETY. One that cannot be confused with any previous version of this film on laserdisc, video tape or even in the cinema. For the first time ever, HIGH SOCIETY — the biggest moneymaking film of 1956 — was presented in GENUINE STEREO. The man to thank for this is Scott Perry, a longtime executive of MGM. It was he who undertook the monumental task of re-editing and remixing the original stereo masters from the sound-track. (If MGM can do it for laser, why can't Capitol do it for CD?)

Unlike other MGM musicals of the mid-50s (all of which were shot in CinemaScope with 6-track magnetic stereophonic sound) HIGH SOCIETY was filmed in VistaVision. The only other MGM film to be shot in this process was Hitchcock's NORTH BY NORTHWEST (1959). Both Bing and Hitchcock had been under contract to Paramount when VistaVision was first developed (WHITE CHRISTMAS, in fact, was the first-ever film in that process) and both had signed contracts to do their next three films in that system — regardless of which studio they worked for.

The VistaVision frame carried no facility for 6-track stereo. So theatres had the option of exhibiting the film either in mono or in something called Perspecta Stereo which instead of sending simultaneous signals to the various speakers as in true stereo simply changed the direction of the sound by panning the signal from one speaker to the other. Most theatres wisely decided on mono — as they did three years later with NORTH BY NORTHWEST.

What has also been included on this new laserdisc is the film's Overture (splendidly orchestrated by Conrad Salinger) and the film's original theatrical trailer featuring Bing in an amusing inverview with Ed Sullivan. Neither of these items have been previously presented on disc or tape. The overture has not been heard since the 1956 premiere.

And what of the effect of all this technical improvement? Was it worth all the time, trouble and expense that MGM/UA have lavished on it? The answer is a resounding YES. The film now sounds better than ever. The new mixdowns reveal all the subtle nuances of Bing's rich baritone and the orchestral textures are captured with a brilliance and spaciousness that puts many modern-day recordings to shame. As for Bing's classic vocal encounters with Armstrong and Sinatra, these sparkle as never before.

The film is described as a "De-Luxe Letterbox Edition" being presented for the first time in its full original theatrical aspect ratio. Every section of the film — the songs, the key dialogue sequences, are individually chaptered allowing easy access to one's favourite portions of this popular film.

If I have one minor criticism it has to do with the print. Although it looks far better than any version seen on TV or tape, it would have been nice if MGM/UA had been able to go back to the original negative and produce their master from that — unfortunately, this would probably have meant that we would again have to listen to the same old mono soundtrack. In which case, I am happy to put up with a few marks on the opening reel — the rest of the picture is near-flawless and quite the best print available.

The most recent Crosby laser release in the USA is an excellent four-film boxed set, THE ROAD PICTURES COLLECTION (1940-1946). As you may guess, this is not the entire 7-film collection but just the four pictures that are currently owned by MCA. (ie. SINGAPORE, ZANZIBAR, MOROCCO and UTOPIA.)

The quality of the prints is excellent and the digital remastering has given the soundtracks a warmth and depth that makes them far superior to any previous video releases of this material. The only time one can hear a momentary scratchiness is in Dorothy Lamour's solo vocal "The Moon And The Willow Tree." Elsewhere the quality is first-rate.

MCA have managed to keep the cost down by mastering the four films onto three discs — each of which have been copiously chaptered allowing the buyer to call up the preferred film — or sequence — in a matter of seconds. The box itself is designed like a suitcase with place-name stickers on it "Singapore", "Zanzibar", etc and comes with an attractive booklet containing production notes and stories regarding the making of the series.

The one inconsistency with the films themselves is that MCA have given Bob Hope top billing all over the box — front and back and in the booklet. Perhaps it's because Bob was 90 this year and this set may have been issued as part of the celebrations. Alternatively, it could be because Hope is said to own all of the real estate on which Universal Studios (the home of MCA) stands and perhaps MCA are trying to be nice to their landlord. But whatever the reason, this is a beautiful set to possess and makes far better viewing (and listening) on disc than on tape.

No doubt, there will be quite a lot more of Bing on laserdisc in the future — and I'll be happy to review them as and when they become available.

Ken Barnes

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from transactions undertaken as a result of these entries.

Please send all advertisements to the Editor.

FIRST — EXCITING NEWS

Da Capo Press, 3 Henrietta St., Covent Garden, London WC2E 8LU (tel: 071 240 0856)

John Marshall has drawn our attention to a reissue of "Call Me Lucky" as follows.

CALL ME LUCKY
Bing Crosby and Pete Martin
348 pp., 54 photos Pbk £12.50
8" x 5" paperback format.
New 6 page introduction by Gary Giddins.

Available from Da Capo Press, details above.

This is a tremendous development. The price of £12.50 includes p. & p. in the UK. We understand that the books are newly imported.

Timothy A. Morgereth, 5 Beach Drive, Inverness, Baltimore, MD 21222-4925, USA

Collector/Researcher seeks to purchase UK 78s and selected US 78s. Also seeks US Decca LPs (10" & 12"). Lists available upon request. Other specific wants include 20th Century Fox TFM 3106, Triple-B T-1001, Warner Bros 3639, Fleetwood FCLP 3059, United Artists UXL4, Going Hollywood Vol. 3, 4, 5, 6, Shhh Bing Vol. 1, JGB 1001, 1002, 1003, Bing & Friends Vol. 2 (Hits).

Arthur H. Blood, 597 Osmaston Rd., Derby DE2 8NE

The new Bing stamp is now available. Price is still £2.20 per 20. Profits to John Marshall's Variety Appeal.

John Marshall, 39 Kings Rd., Teddington TW11 0QD (tel. 081-977-6180)

"The video collection now features excellent copies of all of the following:- Just For You, The Starmaker, Pennies From Heaven, Entertaining The Troops, If I Had My Way, Paris Honeymoon, We're Not Dressing, Birth Of The Blues and **Mississippi**.

As a special bonus, all double film purchases will include the 'Inside Edition' Kris Crosby piece, with around 30 minutes of the 1962 Bing Crosby TV show with Bing, Gary, Bob Hope etc. £11.50".

(Editor: Proceeds of the above will of course go to John's Variety Appeal and as we went to press, we heard that the Appeal stood at a figure in excess of £250. Marvellous news and this should allow a good insert in Variety in October to commemorate Bing's passing. Full details in the next edition.)

Mrs. P. France, 16 Mynors Crescent, Hollywood, Birmingham B47 5JG. (Phone: 0564-822843)

My brother passed away some months ago and has left 378 Bing Crosby records, all 78 rpm and all in excellent condition. Also there are a vast number of other 78s by artists such as Frank Sinatra, the Mills Brothers, the Andrews Sisters and the Ink Spots. I wish to sell all of these, ideally as one lot. Anyone interested, please contact me direct.

George Harwood, 5 Glebe Rd., Hemingford Grey, Huntingdon, Cambs PE18 9DS (Phone: 0480-463680).
George offers an intriguing lucky dip.

On behalf of Fred Dolby, he is looking to sell about 150 7" reel to reel tapes, some on long play tapes, some on double play. They are mostly recorded on 4 tracks and appear to be in very good condition visually. The only snag with them is that there is no indication as to the contents on a big majority of them although it is virtually all Bing material. George offers them at £1 per tape with 50p coming to ICC funds and the remainder to Fred Dolby.

A bargain basement price even if you use them as blank tapes. There are some of the rarer radio shows of Bing on the tapes as well. Contact George for further details.

Stan Woodford, 6 Mariam Gardens, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 6QA (tel. 0708 445049)

Stan has on offer many VHS video items and song compilations of Bing, including a new seven hour chronology of film songs, that may be of interest to members. SAE for lists please.

Margaret Otway, 14 Barnsley Way, Conisbrough, Doncaster DN12 3LB

New member Margaret is anxious to pick up books about Bing, especially "The Hollow Man". Please contact her direct if you can help.

Royal Hampshire 3 Grove Park, Mill Lane, Alton, Hampshire GU34 2QG

We have received sketchy details via third parties about a planned series of sculptures called "Hollywood Greats". A Bing sculpture is included. Further information will be given as received but in the meantime anyone interested should write to the address shown above.

Vincent Pietroniro, 378 Cabano, Lasalle, Quebec, Canada H8R 2MI

WANTED
"Will pay top prices for cassette copies of Bing Crosby (chronology material) songs".

Syd Woods, 100 Iona Way, Kirkintilloch, Glasgow G66 3PU (Tel. 041-776-7058)

I have a number of Bing LPs that I wish to sell and I thought £2 each (plus postage) would be a reasonable price., Would prefer to sell them as one collection but will split them if this is not possible. The titles are:-

1. Bing Crosby — Louis Armstrong 2. Fancy Meeting You Here 3. That's What Life Is All About 4. Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire 5. The Final Chapter 6. Bing Crosby (Joker) 7. 16 Golden Classics 8. Bing sings Broadway 9. Radio Years Vol. 1 10. Seasons 11. Feels Good, Feels Right 12. A Holiday Toast 13. White Christmas (MFP) 14. True Love 15. 20 Golden Greats 16. Tenth Anniversary Collection (3 CDs).

All in near mint condition.

Dennis Chester, 53 Park Crescent, Eastwood, Nottingham NG16 3DS (Tel. 0773-761548)

Dennis is having to dispose of a silver necklace belonging to his late wife Renee. It consists of the traditional Bing silhouette with chain in a presentation box. Thought to be unique. Bids direct to Dennis please.

REG BRISTO — gone but not forgotten

John Unwin drew our attention to a brief mention about Reg in the Nostalgia magazine issued last Autumn. In his column, Bill Amstell had written the following:

"Although I had never met Reg Bristo the impression I got when speaking to him on the 'phone was that he seemed a kind and reasonable person. It was a privilege to have his private number which I did not abuse.

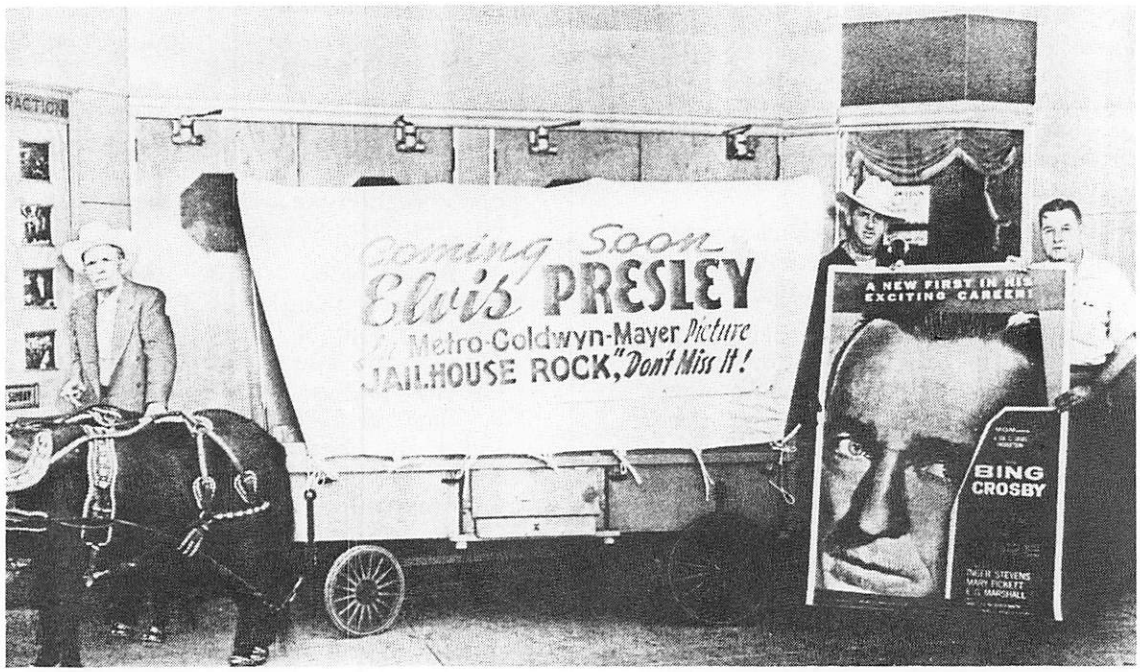
The way in which he manipulated (this I know for a fact) mediocre articles he received into readable material was quite extraordinary. Reg edited his popular "Golden Years Magazine" and it was through the late Tony Clark (another nice guy) that we made contact. To many of his loyal friends Reg Bristo was regarded as a dedicated 'old timer'; even though he has been gone just over two years, some of us will remember him with affection."

ICC members will not have forgotten Reg either.

Keith Parkinson's
CELLULOID CROSBY
1957

An intriguing illustration in the book 'Elvis World' (Alfred A. Knopf, 1987) encapsulates the wind of change the mid-fifties felt in popular entertainment. It is a photograph taken in the foyer of an American movie theatre. Colonel Tom Parker, Elvis Presley's manager, is seen looking over a giant poster advertising Bing in "Man On Fire". The top of the poster bears the legend, 'A new first in his exciting career". Next to Parker is a small covered wagon drawn by a pony. The side of the wagon announces: "Coming Soon. Elvis Presley in 'Jailhouse Rock'. " The only commonality of the two films is that both are M.G.M. Pictures.

"Man On Fire" was Bing's first straight dramatic role without songs. "The Country Girl" (1954) provided a challenging part for him but the film contained four songs. The only Crosby vocal in "Man On Fire" was heard over the opening credits. Even that was a last minute decision because the Ames Brothers had made a recording of the title song for soundtrack purposes. In the event their version was used over the end titles.



In the 'fifties, film studios went to extremes to ensure a title song was available to exploit a picture, hopefully via a hit recording. Doris Day's films were promoted well in advance of their U.K. release through her best selling discs. A good example of this type of promotion in 1957 was the song 'Around The World', which increased public awareness of Mike Todd's star-studded film 'Around The World In Eighty Days'. We all remember Bing's Brunswick single, which was released in May, but by July you could buy vocal versions by Ronnie Hilton, Jack Haskell, Ronnie Carroll, Gracie Fields and Jane Morgan. In addition there were orchestral only versions. We felt cheated when the B-side of Bing's 78 was a non-vocal recording of 'Around The World' by Victor Young and his orchestra, even though he was the film's composer.

In August of 1957, when Bing's Capitol recording of 'Man On Fire' came out, there was an even greater disappointment in store. The 'B' side of the disc was definitely category 'B' material. "Seven Nights A Week" was Bing's ill advised Rock 'N' Roll debut. Although 'Man On Fire' was not an exceptional song there were cover versions on 78 available in this country from Jimmy Young, Frankie Vaughan and Jerry Grant, plus orchestral only recordings from Victor Silvester and George Cates.

The composers of 'Man On Fire' were Paul Francis Webster and Sammy Fain. They were past masters at writing pop songs from film titles. The same year as 'Man On Fire' they had a major success with 'April Love' from the Pat Boone movie of the same name. Webster probably had the hardest job because he had to provide the lyrics which embodied the film titles. He started back in 1936 with "Rainbow On The River" but

he had really hit his stride by the late 'fifties with the likes of 'Friendly Persuasion' (1956) and 'A Certain Smile' (1958).

At this time, even the most unlikely film titles spawned best selling records., "Three Coins In A Fountain" (1954), "The Man From Laramie" (1955) and "Gunfight At The O.K. Corral (1957) are three which helped to sell cinema tickets because their awkward titles were turned into melodious ballads.

"Man On Fire" was Bing's penultimate black and white film. By now the film studios not only wanted to provide something television couldn't — colour — but also to boost the value and sales potential of their film libraries to television when colour sets became available on a large scale. In the States colour television had barely progressed beyond the experimental stage and programmes filmed for TV transmission were almost always monochrome.

One such film series from the 1950s, provided a pleasant surprise when it recently turned up on video. Three episodes of "The Phil Silvers Show' have been released by CBS/Fox on one tape. Called "Sergeant Bilko", and proudly displaying the message 'Authentic Mono Black and White' on the spine, the third episode is "Sergeant Bilko presents Bing Crosby." It was first transmitted in the U.S. on 22nd January, 1957. We had to wait until 5th May, 1958 before it received a showing on BBC TV. In those days you could see Bilko three times a week with repeats of early shows. Sundays, Tuesdays and late night, Fridays offered Bilko on the box, such was the popularity of Phil Silvers. The Bing episode has been repeated several times because the BBC owns the U.K. rights in perpetuity for television screenings. In the Crosby episode, Sergeant Ernie Bilko negotiates with Everett Crosby for brother Bing to appear at Fort Baxter. Bing appears at the end of the twenty five minute episode — only to recite "The Wreck of the Hesperus'. Full details in Bert Bishop's "Bing on the Box" article in BING 102.

Keith Parkinson

A THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES Z

Keith completes the letter C as his massive project continues.

COLUMBO, RUSS (1908-1934) Singer. Columbo belongs in this 'A to Z' in order to dispel a hoax perpetrated by a prominent American record collector and compounded by an equally prominent Australian one. In the late 1960s a short film called 'The Romantic Rivals' was the basis for a limited edition album of Crosby/Columbo duets. These twelve songs were supposedly taken from the soundtrack of a Pathe short which in itself was a 'Test' for a proposed feature length film. That feature, which would star the two crooners, was planned for around 1930. Bing had no memory of such a film and no soundtrack recording found its way onto the collectors market. However, a limited edition LP which originated in Australia contained a 'duet' of 'Goodnight Sweetheart'. The record album indicated that the song was from the 'Romantic Rivals' film. That particular song was not one of the dozen stated as being on the American pressed sountrack album. Conveniently, it was a song commercially recorded by both Crosby and Columbo. With careful engineering an impression of the two vocalists being present at the same recording session was created. Columbo was popular in his day and although not a serious rival to Crosby he made greater headway than Bing in Hollywood. At the time of his death by an accidentally inflicted gunshot wound he had made eight features, the most popular being his last, 'Wake Up and Dream' (1934).

COMO, PERRY (1912-). Singer. In 'The Fifth Freedom' (1951) a ten minute short extolling the virtues of smoking Chesterfield cigarettes, both Crosby and Como appear in separate segments. Como sings 'Bless This House'. Professionally the two appeared together on radio and television but never on the cinema screens. Como's own relationship with movies was brief. He appeared in four films at a time he was establishing himself as a serious male vocalist alongside Crosby, Sinatra and Haymes. They were 'Something For The Boys' (1944), 'Doll Face' (1945), 'If I'm Lucky' (1946) and 'Words And Music' (1948). Why did his career come to a sudden halt? One reason given is that at a party on the M.G.M. lot after 'Words And Music' was in the can he sang a song which contained uncomplimentary remarks about Studio Head Louis B. Mayer. Mayer could not carry out the physically impossible manouevre suggested by Como so gave him the sack instead.

CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT, A. Film. Or 'Connecticut Yankee' (its officially registered alternate title in the U.S.A.), or 'A Yankee In King Arthur's Court' (its British release title). Whatever its title, it was a popular film at the time of its release in 1949. It earned $3M in North American rentals and was placed 16th in Variety's table of money making films that year. However, its substantial production costs — $3,020,000 — meant Paramount had to wait for overseas rentals and a subsequent re-release before the red ink disappeared from the Studio accountant's ledger. Paramount originally planned to use the Rodgers and Hart score from a successful stage

production but M.G.M. held the rights and wouldn't relinquish. This proved to be no great hardship because Crosby's regular film songsmiths Johnny Burke and James Van Heusen came up with a trio of tailor made tunes for Bing: 'If You Stub Your Toe On The Moon', 'Once And For Always' and 'We're Busy Doing Nothing'. Because the plot was not overloaded with song sequences, the tried and tested Mark Twain story could be developed to the full. It had been filmed before in 1921 and 1931. Bing plays Hank Martin, an American visitor to England in the year 1912. Seven years earlier, back in the States, a blow to the head magically transported him back to 528 AD. There he fell for Rhonda Fleming and his visit to England re-unites him with that gorgeous lady.

COOPER, GARY (1901-1961). Actor. Coop was a friend of Bing's. Crosby son Gary was named after him. Yet Crosby and Cooper never appeared on screen together although they were both in four films:

Hollywood On Parade No. 2 (Short, 1932)
Star Night at the Cocoanut Grove (Short, 1935)
Variety Girl (1947)
Alias Jesse James (1959)

The friendship was off screen, although Cooper was persuaded to guest with Bing on radio. Cooper's film career began in 1925 and it comes as no surprise that he was regularly cast as an extra in Westerns. A year later he got his big break as second lead in 'The Winning Of Barbara Worth'. He was a star thereafter until his death of cancer. Everyone has a favourite Gary Cooper movie. I will select a personal favourite from his three decades of stardom: 'Mr. Deeds Goes To Town' (1936); 'Sergeant York' (1941) and 'High Noon' (1952). He was still in front of the cameras after his terminal illness had been diagnosed. The last film in which he appeared was the thriller 'The Naked Edge' (1961), which was shot in England.

CORD, ALEX (1931-) Actor. In theory, Cord was the leading man in the remake of 'Stagecoach' (1966) because he played the Ringo Kid. It was a big break that led nowhere. He'd had an unbilled bit in 'The Chapman Report' (1964) and a minor role in 'Synanon' (1965) before 20th Century Fox took a chance and let him follow in the footsteps of John Wayne. But the shoes weren't big enough and no memorable parts followed. It seems he quietly retired from the big screen.

COSLOW, SAM (1902- ?). Songwriter. The early contribution by lyric writer Coslow to Bing's film and recording career is important. He was there at the beginning and he recognised Crosby's talent at an early stage. He was contracted as a songwriter to Paramount and in 1930 he recommended the studio to use Bing in a Musical they were about to film. At that time Bing was working with the Whiteman Orchestra and the Big Boss said 'No'. So they had to wait a little longer. The full tally of Coslow composed songs Bing sang on screen follows. Unless otherwise stated Coslow wrote them in collaboration with Arthur Johnston. Note how many are now regarded as Crosby Standards.

'One More Chance' (1931 short) Just One More Chance
'Hollywood On Parade No. 4' (1933 short) Boo Boo Boo
'College Humor' (1933) Learn To Croon, Moonstruck, Down The Old Ox Road, Just One More Chance
'Too Much Harmony' (1933) Thanks, The Day You Came Along, Buckin' The Wind, Boo Boo Boo
'Double Or Nothing' (1937) After You (written with Al Siegel)
'Duffy's Tavern' (1945) Learn To Croon
'Out Of This World' (1945) I'd Rather Be Me (written with Felix Bernard and Eddie Cherkose)

Also written for "Too Much Harmony' but not sung in the film by Bing is the Crosby Classic 'Black Moonlight.' Coslow's career as a writer for films petered out in the mid forties., If you want to know more about him, read his autobiography 'Cocktails For Two' (1977). If you want to see him, he accompanies Bing on 'Boo-Boo-Boo' in 'Hollywood On Parade No. 4' (1933). If you want to listen to him, he made a handful of recordings for Brunswick in the early 'thirties. They were dreadful. At least he murders the songs of other composers. 'You Are My Lucky Star', for instance, must be the worst ever rendition of that song.

COUNTRY GIRL, THE. Film. This 1954 Paramount picture was Bing's most demanding dramatic role to date. He tackled the part of hard drinker Frank Elgin valiantly and earned the Oscar nomination for Best Actor voted him by fellow Academy members. The film's story charts the trials of near alcoholic Elgin when he is cast in a Broadway musical. The audience has to tussle with two issues during the film's 104 minutes:

(i) Will Bing overcome his drink problem and be a success in the musical play 'The Land Around Us' and

(ii) Will Bing get the girl in the eternal triangle involving Grace Kelly and William Holden.

It won't spoil your future viewing enjoyment if I tell you "YES" on both counts. "The Country Girl" is an interesting departure from the typical Crosby movie norm in that the four songs Bing sings are hardly Hit Parade contenders. When he went serious with 'Little Boy Lost' the year before, composers Burke and Van Heusen had an eye on record sales but 'The Country Girl' remained faithful to Clifford Odets' 1950

Broadway hit and songs were tailored to the play within a play rather than "Bing Sings Pop Songs". I remember leaving the cinema feeling rather let down after seeing "The Country Girl'. I had expected a light hearted Crosby vehicle. Now I see it in a different light. It is Bing's finest acting performance.

COUPLE OF SONG AND DANCE MEN, A. Song. This was just one of the nearly two dozen Irving Berlin songs crammed into Paramount's "Blue Skies" (1946). It is sung, and danced, by Bing and Fred Astaire during a rehearsal session. It is to form part of a new show to be staged at the Night Club owned by Bing. It is supposed to be part of a routine from the earlier Vaudeville days of the Crosby-Astaire show-business partnership. The real Crosby and Astaire were both Decca recording artistes at the time the film was released and a hit single resulted. Some thirty years later the two got together again in London and re-recorded the song for a best selling album produced by Ken Barnes.

CRONYN, HUME, (1911 -). In "Top O' The Morning" (1949), actor Hume Cronyn was no better and no worse a stage Irishman than the rest of the cast (Barry Fitzgerald excepted!). As Constable Hughie Devine he is assigned to help find the stolen Blarney Stone, but all is not what it seems and he also turns out to be a murderer. At this stage in Cronyn's career he was alternating between the Broadway stage and Hollywood movies. In more recent times Broadway has claimed him more often than the cinema. He started at the top in films with a part in Hitchcock's "Shadow Of Doubt" (1943) and sufficiently impressed Hitch to be in that Director's "Lifeboat" a year later. After the 1940s only a good acting part would tempt him from his stage work. Such parts were few and far between but included "People Will Talk" (1951), "Hamlet" (1964) and "The Parallax View" (1974). One of Broadway's appeals to Cronyn is the opportunity it offers for him to star with his actress wife Jessica Tandy. They married in 1942 and attempt to structure their careers so that they act together. In the 1980s such opportunities presented themselves in the successful "Cocoon" and the follow-up film "Cocoon — The Return".

CROONER'S HOLIDAY. Film. This was the title given to the Mack Sennett short 'Dream House' (1931) when Astor Pictures re-released it in 1935. They abridged the Sennett one reeler but left the four Crosby vocals intact.

CROSBY, BOB (1913-1993). Actor, Singer, Bandleader and kid brother of Bing. Brother Bob appeared fleetingly in one Bing Crosby picture. That was 'Road To Bali' (1952) in which he fires a rifle for no other reason than to allow Bing to crack the joke, "I promised him a shot in the picture". Bob had one earlier offscreen link with Bing's film career. The 1942 film "Holiday Inn" carried the credit 'Special arrangements by Bob Crosby's Orchestra'. The regular Paramount Musical Director Robert Emmett Dolan also received credit on the film. Bob's showbusiness career began at the age of 22 when he was signed up as Band Vocalist by the Dorsey Brothers. Singing became secondary once he formed his own Dixieland Band. His singing style was not unlike Bing's but he inevitably suffered by being compared unfavourably to his famous brother. His film work was mainly in minor films, usually from Poverty Row Studios, or as a speciality appearance as Band Leader in a major production. The latter category covers 'Presenting Lily Mars' (1943) 'When You're Smiling' (1953) and 'Senior Prom' (1959). The 'B' pictures he made carry such uninspiring titles as 'Rookies On Parade' (1941), 'Kansas City Kitty' (1944) and 'The Singing Sheriff' (1944). By the 1950s he was accepted for the musician he was rather than a close relative of somebody very famous. He made his mark on Radio and Television in that decade. His last film provided him with his best remembered screen appearance as Will Paradise in 'The Five Pennies' (1959).

CROSBY, COLUMBO AND VALLEE. Cartoon Shorts. The Crosby caricature and vocal impersonation have featured in over a dozen animated shorts. This was the first, released by Warner Brothers in 1932. The title refers to the three most popular singers at the time in the U.S.A. and a non-Bing recording of the song 'Crosby, Columbo and Vallee' had a degree of popularity.

CROSBY BOYS (Dennis, Gary, Lindsay and Phillip). They were sons from Bing's first marriage to Dixie Lee and all four were involved in Crosby films released in 1945. Bing was not on screen with them in either, something psychiatrists would no doubt find interesting in the 1990s. In the first, "Duffy's Tavern" Robert Benchley tells the four of them a bedtime story. In the second, "Out Of This World", they are part of an audience at a radio show when Dad's voice emanates from the mouth of Eddie Bracken. In addition, Gary and Phillip had brief moments separately in two of dad's movies. Gary is glimpsed with Bing at Paramount Studios in the 1942 'Star Spangled Rhythm' and Phillip has one line as a mobster type in 'Robin And The Seven Hoods' (1964). Lindsay and Dennis died by their own hands in 1988 and 1991 respectively.

CULVER, ROLAND (1900-). Actor. Remembered for his one appearance in a Crosby picture as Count Von Stolzenberg-Stolzenberg. He comes between Virgil Smith (Bing) and Countess Johanna, his daughter (Joan Fontaine) because he wants her to marry someone with money. Culver was more usually cast as the British gentleman rather than an American aristocrat. Yet he fitted the part well. Born in London, he made his stage debut in 1925 and entered British films six years later. Before he went to Hollywood he was in the likes of 'French Without Tears' (1939) and 'The Life And Death of Colonel Blimp' (1945). He never amounted to much in the States and from the 1950s has gone to wherever the work is available. 'The Yellow Rolls-Royce' (1964) and 'The Mackintosh Man' (1973) stand out as a pair of big budget films which failed to deliver but where Culver's presence had an enlivening effect.

CUMMINGS, ROBERT (Bob). (1908-1990). He was Robert in his early years, Bob when he was a television favourite in the 1950s, and Robert again when he played alongside Bing in the 1966 remake of 'Stagecoach'. In that film he was cast against type as Gatewood, who robbed his father-in-law's bank and became a fellow passenger on the stage to Cheyenne. He began on Broadway in 1931 when he faked a British accent and represented himself as English actor Blade

Stanhope Conway. Then he conned his way into movies by passing himself off as Texan Brice Hutchens to win a part in the western 'The Virginia Judge' (1953). His forte was light romantic comedy and dozens of titles as the 'real' Robert Cummings carried him through to the 1950s. When you pay money to see the likes of 'Three Smart Girls Grew Up' (1939), 'It Started With Eve' (1949), 'Between Us Girls' (1942) and 'Heaven Only Knows' (1947) you know what you are getting for your money. When the BBC showed the U.S. television comedies 'The Bob Cummings Show' those who were breaking the picture going habit remembered how he had kept his youthful looks. How much can be attributed to his well publicised vitamin diet and how much to his three wives and seven children we will never know. A large screen career revival in the 1960s produced 'My Geisha' (1962) 'The Carpet Baggers' (1964) and his last film 'Five Golden Dragons' (1967).

CURTIZ, MICHAEL (1888-1962). Director. It seems fitting that the one Crosby picture Curtiz should direct was "White Christmas' (1954), because he was born in Budapest on Christmas Eve. It turned out to be Bing's most financially successful movie to date. Whilst still at Paramount two years later he directed 'The Vagabond King' and Bing appeared in that film's promotional short 'Bing presents Oreste'. Prior to his Paramount days he was contracted to Warner Brothers. Indeed, Harry Warner brought him to Hollywood in 1926 and he made more than one hundred films for that studio. Some are classics such as 'The Charge Of The Light Brigade' (1936), 'The Adventures of Robin Hood' (1938), "Yankee Doodle Dandy' (1942), 'Casablanca' (1943) and 'Young Man With A Horn' (1950). He was past his peak by the time he left Paramount but as well as making 'White Christmas' there he directed 'King Creole' (1958) which is regarded as Elvis Presley's best film. He quit on a high at the age of 73 with the John Wayne starrer 'The Comancheros' (1961). His loose command of the English language provided David Niven with the title for one of his autobiographical memoirs, when Curtiz was shooting a scene which called for riderless horses his command was 'Bring on the Empty Horses.'

"You'll Never Guess Who Just Walked In . . . "

by Timothy A. Morgereth

In the burgeoning days of non-network radio programming when "The Milkman's Matinee" and "The Make-Believe Ballroom" were the most popular entrees of their idiom, a new breed of announcer, patterned after Paul Whiteman, Jazzbo Collins, Martin Block and Stan, the all night record man made his appearance — the disc jockey. These "d.j.'s", as they were soon to be known, in an effort to copy and seek the popularity of their renowned predecessors, devised many gimmicks to boost their Hooper ratings. The most often used of these "tricks" is the now beloved, "I'm glad that you enjoyed that record of 'I Can't Begin To Tell You' by Harry James. I'll now play . . . Oh!, you'll never guess who just walked in the door, folks. It's Bing Crosby, just the ol' fella with an umbrella himself. Maybe he'll say a few words or sing us a song . . . " Of course, Bing or friends wouldn't actually be there, but the ingenious d.j. would produce a disc and a script that would give the impression of an actual "live" interview.

The discs in my collection are ten inches shellac long playing albums. One side features a Paramount staff announcer interviewing his prospective guest as transcribed in the following script. The other side has only the voice of the guest, with silent pauses for the local d.j. to conduct his own "interview" with the guest star creating the illusion described in the aforementioned scenario. So, without further ado, I present Bing Crosby . . .

NOTES AND TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW — BING CROSBY

Note: An additional, optional speech has been written at the end of the interview, should you care to include BING CROSBY SINGING ONE OF THE SONGS FROM "HERE COMES THE GROOM". You'll find a list of the songs also at the end which may be available to you in your music library.

Commentator: Today, (tonight) we have as our guest, a man who's voice is as familiar as that of your closest friend. As a matter of fact, his easy-going breezy style has endeared him to so many millions of people all over the world they actually THINK of him as a close friend. And since he needs no introduction, I'll get right to the point and say, welcome to our program . . . MR. BING CROSBY.

Bing: Thank you . . . thank you . . . that was a mighty nice introduction. Kinda makes me feel right neighbourly pal!

Commentator: Well, Bing, it's true. And you need no further proof of the way people feel about you than to hark back to all the congratulations you received last January.

Bing: Oh, you mean that "Bingsday" routine, and my Twentieth Anniversary in show business and all that deal. Well all I can say is I was really overwhelmed . . . and very grateful too for all those wonderful telegrams,

letters and cards. And if anybody's listening that I haven't gotten around to thanking . . . believe me, I want to thank you right now and say right here that I appreciated everything tremendously!

Commentator: Bing, I hear that Producer Frank Capra has really outdone himself with your latest picture "HERE COMES THE GROOM".

Bing: You know something? I kinda agree with you! Frank's got that "Capra touch" all right . . . he's famous for it and no matter who he's working with, they must end up by giving their best on the screen. We had lots of fun making "Here Comes The Groom" . . . and I think you'll find quite a lot of the fun ended up on the film too!

Commentator: Elucidate, old chap . . . elucidate!

Bing: Well, you know ALEXIS SMITH . . . the beautiful gal. You've seen her a lot and you know what kind of lady she generally plays on the screen . . . staid, prosaic society debutantes. Well . . . what would you say if I told you that ALEXIS and JANE WYMAN stage a real "no-holds-barred" wrestling match in the picture!

Commentator: You're kidding!

Bing: No — I'm not kidding! First I teach Alexis to wrestle . . . . and then she and Janie get in a fight at a big wedding rehearsal . . . and I want to tell you, the battle's on! It's better than Television!

Commentator: That I've got to see! What role does Jane Wyman play, Bing?

Bing: Well . . . in the picture she plays a gal named "Emmadel Jones" . . . a very tasty dish . . . but stubborn as a mule! Boy she's really something when she gets her neck bowed. I'm a newspaperman working for the "Boston Express" . . . and . . . well, I guess I'm kinda lacadaisical you know . . . keep puttin' it off about askin' Emmadel to marry me because the first thing you know, she's gotten herself engaged to Franchot Tone . . . 40 million dollars worth of Boston Society, this boy represents!

Commentator: Now Bing . . . we know you better than that! What rabbit do you pull out of your hat THIS time before you and Emmadel walk hand in hand into the fading sunset?

Bing: Hmmm . . . lovely speech! This time its TWO rabbits . . . a couple of French War Orphans that I bring back from Paris with me. Really a great pair of kids . . . they're terrific!

Commentator: Did you actually discover the children who play these parts when you were over in Paris last year, Bing?

Jane Wyman and Bing in the cool of the evening

Bing: No . . . no, I wish I could say I did but, Irving Asher, who is the Associate Producer of "Here Comes The Groom", found 'em both. One of them is a little gal named Beverly Washburn and he found her right in Hollywood. But the little boy is actually a French kid. He's ten years old and his name is Jacky Gencel and he's about the brightest, cleverest little kid I've ever met in my life! These two come closer to stealing the picture than anybody I've ever worked with. You'll love them!

Commentator: You've got another young foreign player in the picture too, haven't you? Seems to me I read about some young girl with a wonderful singing voice.

Bing: Well the girl you read about is Anna Maria Alberghetti . . . She's a little Italian gal. She's 14 years old, and she has probably the most sensational set of pipes to hit this country in a decade. She made her debut in Carnegie Hall last year and got terrific reviews from the critics. Paramount being on their toes as always, they signed this youngster and they've got some big plans for her in the future.

Commentator: Well, Bing, it sounds like "Here Comes The Groom" has the makings of a wonderful movie!

Bing: I think you're going to like it very much. It's got lots of laughs . . . lots of dancing . . . lots of fun . . . and . . .

Commentator: And lots of songs too, I hope.

Bing: Oh yes . . . Paramount has dished up several tuneful ditties . . . like a song called "Cool, Cool, Cool Of The Evening" . . . This is a very lively, poppy sort of a gang song whipped up by Johnny Mercer and Hoagy Carmichael. You've heard of those two boys I know . . . and then we've got some swell songs by Evans and Livingston. They're the boys who wrote "Buttons and Bows" and "Mona Lisa". One of the numbers they wrote is called "Bonne Nuit" and then they have another song called "Your Own Little House".

Commentator: Well, Bing, from the sound of things, all of us are in for a musical and comedy treat! . . . but don't leave yet, because I've got one more question!

Bing: Well, it's your microphone, what . . . what . . . what goes?

Commentator: Well, last year you made headlines when you were arrested in Paris for sleeping on the grass in a park . . .

Bing: (INTERRUPTS) Uh-oh . . . I know where you're leading up to . . . I feel it comin'. You want to know about my sartorial attire when trying to get a hotel room recently!

Commentator: That's right Bing. How did you feel when that Desk Clerk in Vancouver gave you the heave-ho without recognizing you?

Bing: Well I'll tell you. Bill Morrow . . . he's the fellow who works with me on the radio show . . . we'd gone up to do some fishin' up near Vancouver. I'll admit that we'd been out on the road a couple of weeks . . . been drivin' at night and one other thing we WERE a couple of unshaven, unkempt disreputable looking characters . . . but it was the first time I'd ever gotten thrown out of a hotel even before I'd gotten IN!

Commentator: Were you mad?

Bing: Oh — wasn't mad! As a matter of fact, when he said they were full-up, I believed him, and Bill and I figured we'd hit for some OTHER hotel. At that point, a gimlet-eyed bell-hop pierced my beard, and suddenly, we were hurtled to our room! I guess there wouldn't have been any fuss at all, except, for some reason I am never fully able to understand people who like to rib me about my clothes — my wardrobe!

Commentator: Well, Bing . . . you'd better take your blue-denim tuxedo along on your next trip . . . meanwhile, thanks so much for being our guest today (tonight).

Bing: It was my pleasure. Thanks, and goodbye.

Commentator: Goodbye, BING CROSBY. WE'LL BE SEEING YOU, JANE WYMAN, FRANCHOT TONE, ALEXIS SMITH and all the others in Paramount's . . . "HERE COMES THE GROOM".

Time: 5.20

ADDED COMMENT IF DECCA RECORD OF "(IN THE) COOL, COOL, COOL OF THE EVENING" IS TO FOLLOW:

Commentator: And now, here's Bing singing that tune "THE COOL, COOL, COOL OF THE EVENING" from "HERE COMES THE GROOM".

List of songs from "Here Comes The Groom" which have been recorded:

"In The Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening"
"Misto Cristofo Columbo"
"Your Own Little House"
"Bonne Nuit"

(Editor: A fascinating article from Tim and watch this space for another contribution in a subsequent edition).

BING IN THE USA

David Lobosco gives us the news from America

Since the last issue, the Bing Crosby scene in the States has begun to pick up. The rare "Mr. Music" (1950) was just released on home video. Bing, as always, is in top form, but some of the best parts are the ones where Bing sings with the guest stars like Peggy Lee, Dorothy Kirsten, and Groucho Marx. Hopefully Paramount will release other Crosby gems especially the almost never seen, "Top O' The Morning" (1949).

Maxene Andrews, one of the Andrews Sisters, wrote an interesting book about her days in the USO during World War II. The book has great mention of Bing, and is a fascinating book, except for some mistakes. Maxene discussed the movie "Going My Way" (1944) at one point, and claimed that "Barry Fitzgerald almost stole the show from both Bing and Ingrid Bergman, one of the premier acting beauties of those years." All in all, it's nice to see anything that remembers Bing fondly, and Maxene obviously has great respect for him.

As of this writing, "The Magic Of Bing Crosby II" still has not been released. The producers are still trying to clear up some legal problems that have surfaced with the rights to some of the material used. However, it is still hopeful that the video will be released by year's end. The producers have also begun another project dealing with Bing. They are planning to release a video of Bing's movie songs. Its working title is "A Music and Comedic Celebration of Bing", and it will be released around Christmastime in the States. Finally, the release of the MCA 4-CD Bing box set is also planned for a December release. If all plans follow through, the end of the year could be very fruitful for Crosby lovers. Who could ask for anything more? Until next time, best wishes and may the memory of Bing Crosby live on!

(Editor: Thanks, David. Interested in your news about the video. Bryan Johnson of The Film Syndicate telephoned from the States some time ago and he mentioned his ongoing problems with Part Two of "The Magic Of Bing Crosby". He went on to tell me that he was preparing a new video which will provide a more definitive view of Bing's career and will hopefully include some rare footage. It was originally intended to release this in the USA in August/September to coincide with the issue of the MCA CD box set and it was hoped that a UK release would take place in November. It sounds as though there may have been delays but nevertheless this is exciting news and we await developments with eager anticipation.

Bryan Johnson has now joined the I.C.C. and we are delighted to welcome him to the fold.)

BOB MACHLISS - A REMEMBRANCE

The article in this issue of BING by Bob Machliss is the last comment from Australia which will appear under Bob's name. He died on April 27th last, just after the last BING magazine came out.

He had many friends in the British Isles. He founded The Victorian (Australia) Bing Crosby Society in the 1970s, and at its UK popularity peak about forty members of the I.C.C. were also on the books of that society. The reason for the support of a distant Crosby Organisation was simple: The Club Magazine, 'The Crosby Voice' was a good read. It was edited, prined and distributed by Bob. I acted as representative of the V.B.C.'s in Europe and frequently passed readers' compliments on to Bob.

In the early days of the V.B.C.S. Bob seemed to have boundless energy. The magazine came out with increasing frequency and grew in size. As well as looking after the world wide reading needs of Bing supporters he organised film shows of Crosby movies for Australian members and distributed European produced Bing recordings to the Gang "Down Under".

We were not neglected in the supply of 'extras' in the U.K. either. He made available the video 'Rare Moments with Bing Crosby' and was responsible for arranging the publication of Bing's Kraft Music Hall song listings. But he will be best remembered for his audio tape compilations. I sent these to a lot of members and enjoyed listening to them every time I ran off copies to fill new orders. Bob had put together three ninety minute cassettes of Bing's fluffs, parodies, alternate takes and other rare and seldom heard performances.

Bob loved all things Crosbyana but wanted to share his enthusiasm for Bing's film performances with as many people as possible. As well as the 'Rare

Moments' video his film shows were supplemented by facts sheets which were eventually distributed to all members "By popular demand". He also managed to lay his hands on the soundtrack of the early short "Ripstitch The Tailor"/"Two Plus Fours". This was apparently tracked down to a museum somewhere in Australia and has circulated quite freely since it was 'liberated' by Bob.

On a give and take basis it is clear that a lot of collectors owe much to Bob.

In 1989 I became aware that all was not well with Bob's health. He found it increasingly difficult to cope with the day to day rigours of his own free lance work in advertising and running the V.B.C.S. The club activities were scaled down gradually and by the time motor neurone disease was diagnosed brief newsletters were the only contact with V.B.C.S. members.

Bob finally decided that theClub had to be wound up. The I.C.C. benefitted by the sale of the stock of 'Crosby Voice' magazines held in the U.K. The surplus monies from membership subscriptions were donated to Motor Neurone Research. Janet, Bob's widow relates how he spent his final days listening to his favourite tapes. She says, "He died at home with his family and his music and videos around him from a sudden heart attack. His muscles had gradually ceased to function but he always had a smile for everyone." Condolences from ex-members of the V.B.C.S. have been passed on to Janet.

Keith Parkinson

MEMO FROM MACHLISS

Just prior to his death, Bob sent us an article for the current issue. As always he had valuable comments to make and we now print his last "memo" as a tribute to him.

It's time for a new discography (or two)

So many non-commercial Crosby tracks have been issued since his death, that it's time that someone set them down on paper. The labels vary from private club issues to 'pirate' LPs and CDs to major companies, and the material ranges from 1930 radio broadcasts to 1977 Palladium concert rehearsals. I hope that someone,.somewhere is keeping track of them all.

That then raises the question of whether it's time for **two** discographies — one a 'commercial' listing of recordings that were actually intended for release by the original studio, and two, a 'non-commercial' discography covering everything else. I know that the lines would get blurred in some instances, like that oddity "Nobody" or the 1943 "Mississippi Mud", but these are minor problems.

I'm not sure whether the 'commercial' discography could list every release of every track as did that monumental work THE ROAD TO BING CROSBY back in the 1960s. Such has been the proliferation of re-issues since then, that any listing would surely be double the size. On the other hand, if the work isn't done now, it will probably **never** be done. Some of the smaller labels are virtually gone before they've even arrived!

Crawling along the Road to Hollywood

Browsing through our local video library recently, I was intrigued to see a copy of that mid-forties compilation of excerpts from Bing's first four Mack Sennett comedies, THE ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD. What makes it worth a look is that the company, Astor Pictures, must have had access to the original negatives, because the picture quality is better than any I've seen to date. However, the movie does have its downside in the form of on-camera comments by the producer interspersing the clips and a greater load of fawning, crawling, sycophantic garbage I've never heard! It sounds like a send-up but scarily, it's not. To make matters worse, the man is totally insincere — he speaks in a flat, expressionless voice and makes no secret of the fact that he's reading all his lines off sheets of paper held by someone to the left of camera. Ah well, the tape rental was only $3 a week.

Bing goes commercial in Melbourne

Bing was very much in evidence on our TV screens in the weeks prior to last Christmas, thanks to the commercials for the Myer department store (sort of our equivalent of Selfridges) which featured his duet with Carol Richards on the song SILVER BELLS. It would be interesting to know how those ads influenced sales of Bing's Christmas CDs but I wouldn't be at all surprised if Myer alone didn't sell thousands of copies, especially as they piped the record all over the P.A. system throughout the store.

King of Jazz revisited

Over the years, we've screened KING OF JAZZ several times and I've never ceased to be impressed by the superb precision work of the Russell Markett dancers. No wonder. I've only recently learned that this dance troop went on to become the original Rocketts at New York's famous Radio City Music Hall when it opened a few years later.

Whilst on the subject of KING OF JAZZ which was produced in 1929/30, I'm convinced that this is one of the forgotten masterpieces of early musical film making. In almost every department — colour, spectacular staging, sound recording, camera work, songs and talent, it stands head and shoulders above any other musical film I have seen from the period. Although Disney gets credit for bringing colour to animation, the sequence showing how Paul Whiteman was crowned 'King of Jazz' clearly demonstrates that this was not the case.

The only lapse in the professionalism of the film shows up in some of the support choreography which is

laughably amateurish — Bing in top hat and opera cloak pretending to play the clarinet being a classic example. Of course the film is 'dated' in that it was made over six decades ago but at the same time, much of it has the kind of style that never dates. And from a Crosby collector's point of view, it gives us a perfect view of the Rhythm Boys at their peak. KING OF JAZZ deserves a better place in film history books.

When Bob Crosby lived in Australia

The recent death of Bob Crosby at age 80 reminded me that Bob lived here in Melbourne in the early 1960s, brought out by a local network to host a variety programme. From memory, the show wasn't a great success, and Crosby soon returned to the USA. I wonder that if the Victorian Bing Crosby Society had been going then, whether we would have made contact? It's a sobering thought that had Bing lived, he would have been **90** last May, as indeed was Bob Hope. I can't imagine that he would still be working though, which probably means it's better to get your kids to be comedians than singers!

Whilst we're playing the trivia game of "Guess Who Lived in Melbourne?", did you know that **Eddie Cantor's** brother lived here in the 1920s? (Did you even know that Eddie Cantor **had** a brother?) It's true, and I've even been in the house when it was owned by Melbourne musician Bruce Smeaton. Bruce was still writing music for TV commercials then (he's since moved on to Hollywood) and I went around to discuss a project we were working on.

Bob Machliss

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue.

John Bignell, 21 St. Andrews Avenue, Wembley, Middlesex HA0 2QB.

I have recently finished reading Part 2 of Fred Reynolds masterly "Crosby Collection 1926-1977". This takes us through the years 1935-41. Fred has an ability to describe Bing's singing style and technique which equals and at times surpasses the great Dr. Mize.

The way Fred illustrates the changing Crosby voice from the boisterous dramatic, trail-blazing early 1930s to the smoother, more mature style of 1938-41, why you can almost hear Bing's voice while reading Fred's masterly summaries. No punches are pulled, if Bing waxed a few inferior discs (and he did) then Fred fearlessly analyses what goes wrong and where. I will be fascinated to read how Fred deals with the later 1940s where there does occur a marked deterioration in Bing's voice on several tracks. Remember the painful vibrato on "We'll Gather Lilacs"!

Meanwhile my advice to all our members who do not already possess the first two volumes of Fred's most remarkable treatise is to beg, borrow or steal a copy. Better still, contact John Joyce who is in charge of printing, publishing and distribution before supplies run out. John deserves a special mention for another really professional job.

Finally, whilst writing, can I give a plug for Fred's other book "A Quiet Place In The Country". My wife and I both read this detective story with great interest. Jean actually spotted the murderer as befits a life long addictive reader of Agatha Christie! I commend it to all members and again John Joyce is the man to contact in order to obtain a copy.

Margaret Otway, 14 Barnsley Way, Conisbrough, Doncaster DN12 3LB.

Thank you and the team for an excellent edition of BING. The layout is great and the articles very informative to a new member like myself. May I also thank all the members who have contacted me since I joined and helped me to find out so much more about Bing, to name but two Len Sidaway and Ron Bosley. I've just come back from my first trip to California and Ron very kindly sent me a copy of his article on Hollywood and places relating to Bing plus much, much more and without his help I know my holiday wouldn't have been such a great success.

. . . I was so disappointed by the comments made by Clive Menadue in the last issue that I feel I have to make my own feelings known. How can anyone who professes to appreciate "the magic of Bing" refer to him with phrases such as "this old and weary man whose voice had long deserted him" and "at the shadowy end of his career straining to recall a distant echo of what he once was". Surely Clive listened to the sessions Bing did with Ken Barnes and Pete Moore towards the end of his time with us. All credit to Ken and Pete who are obviously very skilled in their fields, but this was certainly not the voice of a man "no longer able to produce the magic of other days". Listen again Clive to Bing's version of "Heatwave", if that does not stir the blood then *what* does? His voice had so much warmth, so much maturity and experience oozing out of it towards the end of his life. He had so much more to give because of this than he had as a "young Crosby". Taste a fine old wine, Clive, as opposed to a newly bottled one and you'll know what I mean. You savour it and the flavour lasts with you for eternity as will Bing without a doubt . . .

Jim Reilly, 27 Beaulieu Road, North End, Portsmouth PO2 0DN.

. . . may I refer to the letter you published by Clive Menadue. I accept that it is perfectly reasonable for individuals to have their own opinions about Bing, but, I can't accept that Bing had a "shadowy end to his

career". I agree that Bing was looking his age and didn't look his vibrant self when he made what was his last Christmas Show — Bing Crosby's Merrie Olde Christmas. The show however, in my opinion was one of the better ones Bing made. The songs and sketches were very viewable, particularly, the "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas" duet with Twiggy; the "Peace On Earth — Little Drummer Boy" duet with David Bowie and the outstanding Dickens trilogy of song duets with Twiggy and Ron Moody.

I know most members will agree with me that Bing was in great voice at the London Palladium on his appearance in 1976 and 1977 as he was when he recorded his last six record albums. I will never forget those wonderful Palladium Shows which gave us the opportunity of seeing Bing "live". This was far from a shadowy exit, more a glorious way to bow out from a magnificent career spanning over five decades in Show Business.

Bing's last records achieved very good sales and far from being an "old and weary man whose voice had long deserted him" he was in fine voice and people like me and many more were pleased to buy the records. He certainly was an old man but he could still put over a song better than most. In my opinion there were three distinctive ages of Bing:

The 30's up to the early mid 40's
The mid 40's up to the mid 60's
and the latter years up to 1977.

For me, Bing was still Bing in all three periods of his career with differing voice, but with a magic of its own — immensely enjoyable to listen to throughout. If I had to choose my three favourite songs, one would come from each period: 1. Thine Alone, 2. The Bells Of St Mary's and 3. Yesterday When I Was Young (from the last recorded album).

Clive makes another point about "the scarcity of Bing's recordings on BBC Radio". I don't listen to much radio but when I do, I listen to Radio 2 and somehow manage to hear Bing played most days, thanks in no short measure to the likes of Leslie Gaylor, Trevor Wagstaff, Ernest Sutkowski and many more. We had a whole hour of Bing on the marvellous Alan Dell Show in May — many thanks to Alan for a great tribute to Bing. Benny Green is also always playing Bing on his programme. BBC local radio also play their part in keeping Bing to the fore (see Gerry Didymus letter in BING 103). If more people chose to write to the BBC I'm sure that Bing would get even more air time. Unlike some I don't consider Bing fares too badly.

We often hear people complain about the lack of Bing in this and that, but I think we should consider ourselves lucky. Since Bing passed on we've had at least 47 films on TV — who would have thought it possible that we could have our own collection of most of Bing's films? There have been hundreds of records released and since the advent of Compact Discs about 100 releases — what other stars could match this? In my own CD collectionI've got 93 CD's where Bing is the main artist and another 34 where he appears on at least one track.

I'm sorry, I got on my soap box and I didn't know when to get down! I expect this is too long for you to use, but nevertheless you know my views.

(Editor: It was Voltaire in the 18th Century who said "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." I often think of that phrase when putting the Letters page together! We were accused of being bland at one time and I am therefore prepared to occasionally publish letters which may contain contentious comment whether I agree or not. We all have different opinions and as long as we can express these openly without falling out, the ICC will thrive. Clive expressed his view and Margaret and Jim have responded. This is healthy and long may it continue.)

Peter Murray, 5 Hyvot View, Edinburgh EH17 8PQ.

Just got back home after a holiday in the States on a visit to my son who lives in Michigan City. I am enclosing a photo that was taken on the way to downtown Chicago. This is a chinese restaurant and unfortunately it was closed and I was not able to check to see if the owner was a Bing fan.

Bob Sharp, 44 Queensborough Gardens, Gants Hill, Ilford, Essex IG2 6XZ.

I was interested to read in the last BING of Trevor Wagstaff's comments regarding Bing's record sales as stated in the Guinness Book of Records which suggested 362 million sales was exaggerated. I too disagree with this figure as I have read books on Bing which state his sales were in excess of 500 million! Whilst the exact figure will probably never be ascertained I think Norris McWhirter should look again to ensure he brings his figures nearer the mark.

Whilst on the subject of Bing's record sales, what I find astonishing is during the 1930s when the deep depression was on, Bing was still selling a remarkable amount of records. It makes one wonder how many more he would have sold had there been a boom. I was a school boy at that time and had to be content to listen to Bing on the radio as we could not afford a record player. Thankfully things are better now.

Maurice Jackson, 31 Catenby, Werrington, Peterborough, Cambs.

Many thanks for BING 103. I am finding it very interesting reading and plenty of information regarding CDs and cassettes available. One of the first records I bought was in 1949 of Bing and the Andrews Sisters

singing "High On The List" and it cost 3/- (15p). I remember it well because when I got home from town, being the old shellac type it had broken. So I went back and bought another one which left me short of money as 3/- was a lot of money in those days.

Richard Hart, Witley, 6 Torwood Close, Torquay, Devon TQ1 1EH.

Hopefully many of you have obtained a copy of the CD "On Treasure Island" and I hope you will write to me telling me what you think of it. We need your comments please. For those of you who have not bought a copy I urge you to do so as soon as possible.

I would like to thank everyone who helped get this CD issued. I do hope there will be a second CD, either on JSP or on a club label. Either way I need *your* help once again. Please list your choice of tracks which for the most part have not been issued on CD up to and including 1942. I am concentrating on commercial recordings up to that year. Your views on the use of the CEDAR process would also be appreciated.

(Editor: Richard's dogged persistence over several years has resulted in the noteworthy Treasure Island CD being issued. Please give him your comments and suggestions for a further CD.)

Ken Crossland, 9 Arden Drive, Dorridge, Solihull B93 8LP.

Many congratulations on your first issue as editor. It was particularly enjoyable for me since for the first time in three years, I was able to sit and read the magazine in its final form. As you'll know by now, the editor usually knows it backwards by the time that stage is reached.

I was gratified to read some of the comments and reviews of the "EP Collection". I was in touch with See For Miles lately and very pleased to hear that the CD has sold extremely well. It's also noticeable that most of the record stores round here now carry it as regular stock. All of that bodes well and obviously I'll be trying to persuade the company to consider a Volume 2 — or perhaps a variation on the theme based on the 10" LPs.

Stan White, 57 Stanley St., Rothwell, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN14 2EA.

A word of thanks to Ken Barnes for the delightful CD of Bing and Fred "How Lucky Can You Get". Also to Richard Hart, Derek Parkes, John McNicholas, Fred Reynolds and the ICC members who made the choice for the CD "On Treasure Island". It is a lovely selection well engineered by John R.T. Davies and it is to my ears the best sound quality yet heard on "When Mother Nature Sings Her Lullaby" with Eddie Dunstedter backing Bing on that gorgeous 3 manual, 18 pipe Rank Wurlitzer Organ.

Turning to BING 103, you have certainly maintained the high standard set by Ken Crossland with your first edition. It is an interesting one as well with many good articles, which if I may so, make my write-up about the 1961 TV show, written when I was in my twenties, seem a bit below par, although several members have contacted me to say that they enjoyed reading this eye-witness account, as it were.

I do hope Leslie can be persuaded to continue his contribution, after all, he finds plenty to say when striding on with all of his publicity efforts for Bing, and perhaps instead of looking back, he should give a commentary on his current efforts and the success and failure in certain areas (although he rarely fails!).

The letters have again made an interesting contribution to the magazine, and I applaud each member/reader, who takes the time and trouble to write a letter, contentious or not. Many letters are no less than short features, and most welcome. I can understand the comments made by Clive Menadue about the 'old' Bing and I have often pleaded with record companies when they are preparing a Bing release, to use a photograph of him in his young or middle years, which I am sure is how people like to remember him.

. . . let me now congratulate Tony Carpenter for supplying the Bing albums for Sussex Hospital radio. You are quite right Tony, if they have the albums they will feature them, which is what we have found out with many radio stations. This brings me to the letter from Bill White of Brentwood. Bill, if you only ever listen to your local station, Breeze AM, then how can you possibly have any idea of what goes on in other parts of the country, or in national radio? Your comments don't really help those people who persuade national and local radio networks and stations to feature Bing, by offering practical help in the form of information about Bing's career, very often backed up by gifts of CD albums for use in programmes. Of course members are encouraged to write to the request programmes for Bing because each time a request is played, thousands of listeners hear it, which is good exposure for Bing.

Having stated my case Bill, I can well imagine the 'ding dongs' which you had with Reg Bristo over Sinatra. I only mentioned his name in one letter and had a complete page back listing all of the bad things about Frank. I still have it somewhere. I've always enjoyed Frank's songs myself, at least he chose to sing good songs by quality writers, and usually made a good job of singing them. On some of the songs which he recorded in the 1950s and 60s, which Bing had first recorded in the 1930s and 40s, Frank did do a better job, not forgetting the arrangements, as far as meeting the musical trends of the 1950s and 60s were concerned (notice I said 'musical'). Bing had of course catered for the contemporary scene and musical trends at the time of his recordings. So much rubbish has been written about a feud between Bing and Sinatra, in fact Frank has always spoken highly of Bing, and the only clash was an engineered one for show business. When you hear some of the stuff passing as music today, you can only look back and be thankful for singers such as Frank Sinatra, who maintained musical standards when all around them, the sounds of a very different and un-musical scene had taken over.

Breeze AM is a very good "easy listening" commercial radio station, operated by the company who own Essex Radio, an FM station who broadcast contemporary and classic hits (pop). I would think a word of thanks once in a while to Breeze AM at PO Box 300, Southend-On-Sea, Essex SS1 1SY would do a lot of good for Bing.

(Editor: Another good example of open and sincere discourse between members who hold differing opinions. Thanks for the kind words on the magazine Stan, and another who passed favourable comment on the last issue was the previously mentioned Clive Menadue. Clive went on to say . . .)

Clive Menadue, 21 Sunny Bank, Pyle, Mid-Glamorgan CF33 6LW.

. . . It's no mean feat to continually produce new and unfamiliar articles plus facts and figures about an entertainer who has not been among us for a good many years, and especially when those features are aimed at a readership mostly comprised of enthusiasts who know more about Mr. Crosby than they do about their own immediate family!

Thanks for including the photograph of Bing's grave. Being new to the game, I've never seen it before. Of couse the unimportant little marker comes as something of a shock. I suppose it's a lesson in humility to us all to see the remains of the man who once "bestrode the narrow world like a colossus" now contained within such a narrow compass. It certainly appears to be a lovely and quiet place but I'm not sure that I wouldn't have liked the silence to be broken by just one more song from the man himself . . .

On the subject of Bing's hair on the BING 102 cover, I must say that you must be right about the photo's origin. Bing does indeed wear identical pyjamas in "The Big Broadcast" and a photograph taken of Bing together with Morton Downey and Kate Smith around a "Columbia" microphone which suggests a similar time and place shows Bing with a considerable hair loss on the front left hand side. The photo can be seen in the Citadel press publication "They sang, They danced, They romanced." I hope that's been of some help in settling that issue at least.

Keith Parkinson, Meadowcroft, Houghtons Lane, Eccleston, St. Helens WA10 5LD.

Thanks for BING 103. To start an international discussion on Bing's hair (or absence of) was no mean feat. Are you ready to hear about Dave King's moustache (or absence of it)?

The 'unidentified' photograph on page 4 of the magazine which came from the Vox magazine review shows Bing, Marion Ryan and Dave King at the time of the Associated-Rediffusion television show covered in Stan White's Crosby Post reprint. The same three performers are pictured on page 33 except that the set has been lighted in such a way that what appeared as a moustache on Dave King now confirms him to be clean shaven.

(Editor: Ken Crossland also pointed out where the Vox photo came from and I'm kicking myself for not noticing this. However, each performer is wearing slightly different clothes. I began to wonder whether the Vox photo was taken at a rehearsal or of a different scene in the show when a letter arrived from Ron Bosley.)

Ron Bosley, 10 Fountains Avenue, Simonstone, Nr. Burnley, Lancs BB12 7PY.

You are well aware of my long abiding interest in collecting stills and other photographs of Bing, so can I settle the discussion regarding the cover of BING 102? Keith is correct when he states that the still is from "The Big Broadcast". The number 1395-2/7 is confirmation enough. 1395 is the number allocated to this particular film. The figure '2' indicates tht it is an "on the set" shot, as opposed to an actual film scene (MGM used an 'X' to signify the same thing). The figure '7' shows that it is the seventh negative in the series of "on the set" shots for "The Big Broadcast".

I disagree with Keith about the hair. From the start of his career with Paramount, Bing used a hairpiece and in the photograph in question, he is dressed for a scene, including the mussed hair, and to prove this, I enclose a still from the actual scene.

The camera in the photo used in BING 102 is a press model of the period; taking plates; and probably a GRAFLEX reflex model.

Commenting on the photograph on page 4 of the last issue, this is a scene (taken at rehearsal) from the Wembley TV show of 1961. Marion Ryan and Dave King in the background — and yes — Dave King appeared "sans" moustache in the actual show I believe.

(Editor: Wow! Now we know the facts. Thanks, Ron for taking the trouble to lay this one to rest.)

David E. Lobosco, 2533 Rose Drive, Glenshaw, PA 15116, USA.

I'd like to thank everyone who responded to my wanted ad concerning Vera Lynn. It is impossible to thank everyone, but I'd like to personally thank Joe Cain for the tape he sent me. Dame Vera Lynn never sounded better, and I've learned the key to how clubs honouring Bing survive. They survive because of the wonderful members they have brought together.

Arnold Baker, 48 Groomsport Rd., Bangor, Co. Down BT20 5LR.

I have been most interested in the letters in BING regarding comparisons between CD and LP, and thought I write to you with my own observations.

In my view, a proper assessment of the change to the sound of compact disc depends completely on your LP player starting point. If you begin by playing LP's on, say, the usual poor quality record player provided with a budget or low-priced stacked system, then a change to CD will probably sound startlingly good.

On the other hand, if you have been playing your microgroove records on a good, hi-fi deck, then hearing CD's on the system may well be a quite different story. In my own case, I was (and am) using a Thorens TD280 Mk.4 record deck (£200) and my CD player was a Sony CDP791 (also £200), both given excellent reviews in the hi-fi press. I was able to synchronise some CD's with their equivalent LP's, and compare — amongst others — Bing ' n Basie, Bing and Louis, Bing and Rosie (as well as Sinatra's Come Fly With Me and Songs For Swinging Lovers). The LP's won, hands down every time — so that my conclusion was that, pound for pound, LP's are streets ahead.

I discussed this with my friendly hi-fi dealer, and he told me that he has found it necessary at least to double the expenditure on CD to bring the sound close to LP. As a result, I have now gone far up-market in CD, and am perfectly happy with the sound.

However, I do believe that people like us owe a great deal to the CD medium. I am certain that, if CD had not been invented, we would have had NO chance at all to obtain all these marvellous re-issues of Bing, the Swing/Big Band Era and general nostalgia which has poured out on CD. Aren't they wonderfully convenient for picking tracks and storage too? So, my final advice is DON'T THROW AWAY THOSE GREAT OLD LP'S. If you've found CD's better, then buy a better LP player.

Lionel's Lines

"I'll Never Find The Words"

How I envy those writers who appear to be able to type 'Chapter One' across the top of that first blank sheet of paper and promptly rattle off a 565 page novel — four times a year!

I sit here, trying to coax a few elusive words from my much chewed pencil, devoid of inspiration, riddled with self-doubt, imagining crusty old Colonels of Crosbyana spluttering, "Who is this upstart who presumes to pontificate on Bing Crosby and the popular song? What are his qualifications? Have we seen his curriculum vitae?"

Let me set their minds at rest . . . I must confess to never having met Bing Crosby but my brushes with fame do include, receiving a "Thengyew (hic) yunman" from the late Robert Newton, after directing him to the Gents on Liverpool Street station and almost buying the house next door to the chap who does the voice for Postman Pat. In addition, I have written a couple of songs which have been publicly performed — There are sure to be those among you who will recall my big hit, 'There's A Banjo Band In Heaven' which swept East Finchley, in the early Fifties.

Despite such impeccable credentials, I am only too aware of the difficulty in writing anything, new, exciting and original, regarding a man whose life and career has been dissected and catalogued by experts and as we have witnessed, when truth is exhausted, there is a swift descent through half-truths, to near lies and finally, muckraking.

I considered the possibility of an article, examining why record companies are overcharging on the price of CDs by £2 or, in Kylie Minogue's case, £10. As an attention grabber, I could have sailed under the banner 'Was Bing Crosby Killed By The Mafia?' but as you might guess, this story would have ended with the headline. So, to avoid controversy, I shall dispense another episode in the occasional series on those lyricists who have put more words into Bing's mouth than some others and as usual, to illustrate, we shall rummage among the creaks and crackles of vintage radio transcriptions.

In cold print, John Herndon Mercer may have an unfamiliar appearance -- unless you delete the first two names and substitute a simply 'Johnny' when all should become clear.

He wrote more than a thousand popular songs, working with an astonishing array of composers and if I mention, Jimmy McHugh, Richard Whiting, Jerome Kern, Duke Ellington, Harry Warren or Harold Arlen, I shall be registering a disservice to at least, twenty others whose names you would readily recognise.

Mercer supplied the lyrics for only one full-blown, Crosby musical film (Here Comes The Waves) but he managed to contribute just one outstanding song to others and may I nudge your memory with 'I'm An Old Cowhand' (Rhythm On The Range), 'The Waiter And The Porter And The Upstairs Maid' (Birth Of The Blues') and 'In The Cool, Cool, Cool Of The Evening' (Here Comes The Groom). On the other hand, you should need no reminder that, as a vocalist, he cut half-a-dozen sides with Bing, on every occasion but one, singing his own words. Surprisingly, the 'odd man out' is 'Small Fry' with a lyric by Frank Loesser which so resembles his own work, that Mercer must have had to look twice at the song copy, to make sure that he hadn't written it, himself.

As far as we can tell, Bing allowed sixteen years to elapse before performing Johnny's earliest hit. The melody for 'Lazybones' was based on a piano interlude from Hoagy Carmichael's 'Washboard Blues' and the song is claimed to have been created in twenty minutes. The ethnic solecism in this stereotyped image of a lazy black person is largely overcome by duets with Louis Armstrong on Philco Radio Time and Chesterfield. To the cognoscenti, both versions are entirely different but at the same time, both are jewels and in spite of the casual approach, one has the impression of two artistes who know just where (and how far) they are going with the song.

In April 1950, Bing recorded two Mercer songs which were both around fifteen years old, at that time. 'The Dixieland Band', originally written for Benny Goodman has no radio equivalent but 'Jamboree Jones' can be heard on Chesterfield (28.11.51) and with the accompaniment of his regular backing group, the Rhythmaires, this seems a more relaxed and free-wheeling version than the commercial issue.

Another late starter was 'P.S. I Love You'. Written in 1934, with music by Gordon Jenkins, it was revived in the Fifties and provided a million-selling record for the Hilltoppers although some might prefer Bing's nicely restrained versions on General Electric (18.10.53 & 29.11.53).

I would guess that must be close to sixty of Johnny Mercer's lyrics, represented in Bing's commercial output but the most prolific hunting ground for items bearing his name must be within the Kraft Music Hall series. There are some that we are unlikely to hear, including early renditions of 'Goody Goody', 'Mutiny In The Nursery' and 'Eeny Meeny Miney Mo' although, I understand, some of these may be lurking in private collections. Many of those which are available have not become 'standards' and are of more interest perhaps, to the song collector, reflecting, as they do, much of Mercer's work for Hollywood.

The earliest item that bobs to the surface is the result of an unlikely partnership with Fred Astaire who took credit for the music and found a place for his recordings in the Top Ten, in February 1936. Bing was quick off the mark to be able to include 'I'm Building Up To An Awful Let-Down' in the programme of the 20th February 1936 but this unseemly haste is not conspicuous in his polished performance.

'Lost', a Number One hit for Guy Lombardo, was used on several occasions and fortunately, a version heard on the 9th April 1936 has survived. The song is typical of its day and Bing plaintively advises of the loss of 'a heart as good as new' and suggests that 'finder's keepers, loser's weepers'.

John Scott Trotter fashions a sprightly arrangement

Johnny Mercer with Bing on a TV show

for Bing's single chorus (pity!) of 'Have You Got Any Castles, Baby?' (21.10.37), a jolly blend of fairy tale and firearms from the Warner Bros film, 'Varsity Show'.

The most celebrated number from 'Hollywood Hotel', another Warner production, is, undoubtedly, 'Hooray For Hollywood' but Bing and the Music Maids furnish a different memory of Busby Berkeley's stunning sequence from the movie, set in a drive-in diner, with the humourous, 'Let That Be A Lesson To You' (23.2.39).

Johnny Mercer made one of his guest appearances for Kraft, on the programme of 17th November 1938 which served up two more of his songs. Bing had already sung 'Garden Of The Moon' (27.10.38), the title song from yet another, Busby Berkeley musical and on this occasion, from the same film, he is called upon to deliver the curious, 'The Lady On The Two Cent Stamp'. As the 'lady' in question, reposes in a 'stamp collection', he is also obliged to exercise some vocal dexterity in handling the cumbersome line, 'Late one night, I'm looking through the Caribbean section'. The second offering is a delightful duet by Johnny and Bing of 'Could Be' (17.11.38) with a parodied reprise and vocal contributions from Ken Carpenter and Marie Wilson.

Two splendid collaborations with Rube Bloom were big hits and judging by the number of recordings by top vocalists, can be rightly regarded as 'standards'. Bing never recorded either, so, we are lucky to be able to hear him sing, 'Day In, Day Out' (26.10.39) and 'Fools Rush In' (18.7.40). Both numbers are considered to represent the best in popular song writing and for those who eschew the allegorical and prefer virtual reality from their poetry, 'Fools Rush In' provides a delicious bone for them to gnaw on — '. . . and so I come to you, my love, my heart above my head' — nearly as tough an assignment as arranging that rendezvous, 'Where the blue of the night meets the gold of the day'!

There are more songs, from the same period which exemplify the diversity of Mercer's musical associates — '(Gotta Get Some) Shuteye' (20.4.39) with Walter Donaldson; Two with Jimmy Van Heusen, 'Make With The Kisses (30.11.39) and more importantly, 'I Thought About You' (1.2.40) which everybody who is anybody has recorded — except Bing. Any new interpreters are advised to use his radio version as their model! 'Ooh! What You Said' (28.2.40) was salvaged from the failed Hoagy Carmichael, musical show, 'Walk With Music' and 'You've Got Me This Way' (28.11.40), with music by Jimmy McHugh, for the Kay Kyser film, 'You'll Find Out'.

Although Bing Crosby occupied the box-seats for the rousing finale of 'Star Spangled Rhythm' with the powerfully nationalistic, 'Old Glory' (8.6.44), it would appear that patriotism was not enough. Two other songs won the musical honours. Dick Powell and Mary Martin sang, 'Hit The Road To Dreamland' (18.2.43) which enjoyed modest success, at the time and is still used today. In spite of prodigious pieces of misinformation in Charles Thompson's biography of Bing, the big hit, 'That Old Black Magic' (29.3.45) *was* heard in the film, sung by Johnny Johnston. Bing had a later opportunity to dispense some of his applied groaning, when the song was interpolated into 'Here Come The Waves', as a comic commentary on the then, current, Sinatra craze. The composer, Harold Arlen, generously credits the success of the song to Mercer's lyric, "The words sustain your interest, make sense, contain memorable phrases and tell a story. Without the lyric it would be just another long song".

The Fred Astaire musical, 'The Sky's The Limit' was a trifle thin on story-line but contained some more fine tunes. 'My Shining Hour' received one of two, Academy Award nominations for Mercer songs, in 1943. The inestimable, 'One For My Baby' was also featured and one of our poet's rarer 'catalogue' songs, 'I've Got A Lot In Common With You' (17.2.44). The broadcast version is duetted by Bing and Marilyn Maxwell and is slightly adapted to permit some 'in' references to other vocalists — 'You're scrawny and I'm skinny, I'm Frankie, you're Ginny'.

Paramount's, 'The Fleet's In' has always provided a trigger for a spot of personal nostalgia. Having seen the movie, seven times, usually, more by accident than design, hearing the songs now, evokes flashbacks to my past and a montage of smoky camp cinemas. VJ Day, in, of all places, Bletchley and a rainy Sunday, in Blackpool with a sultry temptress of the back stalls (Do try to contain yourselves — we weren't so liberated, in those days!). The score was by Victor Schertzinger, who died, suddenly, during the production of the film. Nine songs were on the music stand, including, 'Arthur Murray Taught Me Dancing In A Hurry' (17.5.45), written for Betty Hutton; 'Not Mine' (30.4.42) and 'I Remember You' (26.3.42), sung by Dorothy Lamour and 'Tangerine' (17.5.45), introduced by Bob Eberly (sweet) and Helen O'Connell (swing) with the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra.

It was not until his ninth nomination that Mercer won the first of his four Oscars for, 'On The Atchison, Topeka And The Santa Fe' from 'The Harvey Girls', starring Judy Garland. Bing recorded this 'train' song in February 1944 and perhaps someone can explain the apparent anomaly of his extraordinarily early 'go' at this number, considering that the film was not completed until, almost two years after this date? He doesn't sing the picture's romantic ballad, 'Wait And See', until the Kraft programme of the 7th March 1946.

The pleasant, if somewhat doleful, 'And So To Bed', popularised by Dinah Shore was used, a couple of times in 1947, on Philco Radio Time and 'Jumping' John, as Bing was apt to call him, guested twice, in the same series, duetting with his host on, 'The Glow Worm' and his own, parodied versions, of 'Small Fry' and 'On A Slow Boat To China'. They also appeared together, on television, in 'The Bing Crosby Show' and 'The Hollywood Palace', during the Sixties which is another story.

There can be little doubt that Mr. Crosby and Mr. Mercer each had a high regard for the other's work and it should not be overlooked that a Johnny Mercer hit was one of the last songs that Bing ever recorded.

You may have noticed that the title chosen for this essay, reflects a line from one of his songs and for a man whose imagination and versatility, brightened so many corners, it is fitting that I should close with another and say that it was all "too marvellous for words'!

Lionel Pairpoint

ONCE IN A WHILE

Cantinflas, the Mexican born actor whose real name was Mario Marino Reyes, died in April at the age of 81. He will be remembered for his role as Passepartout in the 1956 film "Around The World In 80 Days". Following his success in that epic, a major film "Pepe" was built around him in 1960 and Bing made a guest appearance singing snatches of three songs. The film was not a success and Cantinflas returned to the Mexican scene.

Mitchell Parish, the lyricist and poet, passed away on March 31st at the age of 92. It was Mitchell who wrote the lyrics to Hoagy Carmichael's immortal "Stardust" which was such a success for the young Bing. He worked with many other composers such as Jimmy McHugh, Walter Donaldson and Sammy Fain. Lyrics he wrote for songs such as "Sweet Lorraine", "Sleigh Ride", "Don't Be That Way" and "Deep Purple" mean that he was an important contributor to the Crosby legend.

Gary Giddins

Gary is continuing his research into Bing's career to aid his book which is due for publication in 1995. He wonders if any members can help with the following:-

(a) Has anyone any details of Bing's contract with Decca?

(b) Are any details of Bing's film deals available.

(c) Gary would be very interested to see copies of any detailed and informative letters from Bing.

Please pass any information on the above to the Editor who will arrange to pass it on to Gary.

Bing on TV — The Middle Years

As we continue the listing of Bing's TV appearances, we start in 1962 when Bing was approaching his 59th birthday. His health was frequently not good during the early '60s and he had surgery for kidney stones in 1962, 1963 and 1965. He was also sorely troubled with bursitis in 1965 which was bad enough to stop him playing golf.

His TV appearances continued to be carefully rationed with the exception of 1964/65 when his weekly sitcom series was transmitted. Increasingly he cut back on solo performances and took part more often in medleys with other performers. He also started appearing on chat shows with great success. There were memorable variety shows with Mary Martin, Dinah Shore, Caterina Valente and Rosie Clooney plus an excellent Special in 1968 when he sang many of the hits of that year. His live appearances with Bob Hope at Madison Square Garden and at the Waldorf-Astoria were outstanding. Clearly despite his health problems, Bing still had much to offer and the Hollywood Palace appearances in the later part of the decade gave him very useful exposure.

We should be very pleased to receive details of any corrections or additions which members may have to the listings, so that we can update our records for any future publications.

27/2/62 (NBC) — **The Bob Hope Show**
Bing takes part in sketch dressed as a child star with Bob Hope, Jack Paar and Steve Allen

3/4/62 (BBC) Recorded 19/10/61 — **Picture Parade**
Bing and Bob Hope interviewed by Robert Robinson.
* Teamwork (duet with Hope)

14/5/62 (ABC) Recorded Apr. 1962 shown on ITV 11/7/62 — **The Bing Crosby Show**
with Bob Hope, Gary Crosby, Edie Adams, Smothers Brothers & the David Rose Orchestra.
* America
* Medley with Bob Hope (You Lucky People You, Moonlight Becomes You, Road To Morocco, Personality, But Beautiful, Teamwork)
* Let's Not Be Sensible
* Play A Simple Melody (with Gary Crosby)
* Camp Carefree (with entire cast)
* Zing A Little Zong (with entire cast)

24/6/62 — **The Ed Sullivan Show**
14th Anniversary of the show. Bing guests with Bob Hope.

24/10/62 (NBC) shown in UK 7/11/62 — **The Bob Hope Show**
With Lucille Ball, Juliet Prowse and Les Brown and his Band of Renown.
Bing takes part in a skit on "Bonanza" and also sings:-
* I Can't Begin To Tell You
* Put It There, Pal (duet with Hope)

24/12/62 (ABC) recorded Nov. 1962 shown on BBC 6/4/63 — **The Bing Crosby Show**
sponsored by Clairol, with Mary Martin & Andre Previn and his Orchestra.
* This Is A Lovely Way To Spend An Evening (with Mary Martin)
* Medley with Mary Martin (Bing sings:- I Like Music, Cheek To Cheek, I Got Rhythm, This Is A Lovely Way To Spend An Evening)
* This Is A Grand Occasion (with Mary Martin)

* Doing the Bing
* I Left My Heart In San Francisco
* Little Drummer Boy
* Medley with Mary Martin
(Bing sings:- What's New, Singing In The Rain, I Love To Whistle, I Like The Likes Of You, Only Forever, The Song Is Ended, Wait Till The Sun Shines, Nellie)

Bing and Mary waiting till the sun shines

17/2/63 recorded Dec. 1962 **The Dinah Shore Show**
Bing guests with Al Hirt plus Bud & Travis
* You'll Never Get Away (with Dinah Shore)
* Quizas, Quizas, Quizas
* In A Little Spanish Town
* South Rampart St. Parade (with Dinah Shore and Al Hirt)
* Medley with Dinah Shore (Let's Be Buddies, Friends, How About You, Just The Way You Are, I'd Do Anything, Teamwork)
* Let The Rest Of The World Go By (with Dinah Shore)
* S'wonderful (parody — with Dinah)

?/??/63 **Shell Advert**
Bing's version of this advert was shown for the first time. Bing also appeared in many other advertisements, notably for Minute Maid, but it is not intended to attempt to list these.

29/5/63 **The Bob Hope Birthday Special**
Guest spot. Details not known.

7/11/63 (CBS) Recorded 29/9/63 **The Bing Crosby Show**
with Caterina Valente, Buddy Ebsen, The Young Americans and Andre Previn and his Orchestra.
* A Doodlin' Song (with Young Americans)
* Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams
* In The Summertime (with Buddy Ebsen)
* Medley with Caterina Valente
(Bing joins in:- Never On Sunday, Quizas Quizas Quizas, Quando Quando Quando, Bei Mir Bist Du Schon, Suki-yaki, Mademoiselle De Paris, The Language of Love)
* Shenandoah (Across The Wide Missouri)
* Medley with entire cast
(Bing's contribution:- You Are My Lucky Star, The Ballad Of Davy Crockett)
* Danke Schon

?/12/63 **The Grammy Awards**
Bing receives special award for outstanding contribution to the record industry

13/12/63 (NBC) **Bob Hope Comedy Special**
co-host with Jack Benny in absence of Hope who was ill. Guests:- Danny Thomas, Juliet Prowse plus Les Brown and his Band of Renown.
* Do You Hear What I Hear

24/12/63 **The Promise**
narrated by Bing.

4/1/64 to 7/2/70 **The Hollywood Palace**
see listings in BING 100 for details of this series of shows

15/2/64 (CBS) taped 27/10/63 and 3/2/64 **The Bing Crosby Show**
for Lever Brothers, with Rosemary Clooney Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Bob Hope, Peter Gennaro, Kathryn Crosby and John Scott Trotter and his Orchestra
* Pennies From Heaven
* Something To Do (with Rosemary Clooney, Kathryn Crosby and Peter Gennaro)
* I Believe In You (with Bob Hope)
* Dream (with Kathryn Crosby)
* The Oldest Established (with Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin)
* Medley with Rosemary Clooney
(Don't Fence Me In, I'm An Old Cowhand, She'll Be Comin' Round The Mountain, The Crawdad Song, San Antonio Rose, Down In The Valley, On Top Of Old Smokey, You Are My Sunshine)
* Medley with Rosemary Clooney & Kathryn Crosby (Bing sings:- A Scarf, A Stool And Imagination, I Left My Heart In San Francisco, Love Makes The World Go Round)

14/9/64 to 19/4/65 **The Bing Crosby Show**
a half-hour situation comedy series with Beverley Garland & Frank McHugh. See separate listings in BING 98 for details of this series of shows

6/10/64 (NBC) **The Bell Telephone Hour**
Guest spot with Burl Ives and Grant Johannessen (the concert pianist)
* I'm Confessin'
* Avalon
* Chinatown, My Chinatown
* Alabamy Bound

?/??/65 **Tribute to Irving Berlin**
details not known

10/3/65 (ABC) **The Grand Award of Sports**
Bing and Kathryn act as hosts.
Live from New York World's Fair.

27/6/65 (ABC) **The Eamonn Andrews Show**
chat show with Bing, Spike Milligan, Cilla Black, Patrick Campbell & Harry H. Corbett
* The Thrill Is Gone (snatch only)

30/6/65 BBC **Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Championships**
Bing in short interview

6/7/65 BBC **Late Night Line-Up**
Bing interviewed

11/11/65 (CBS) **CBS News Special — Sinatra**
Interview with Bing

1965 **Art Linkletter**
Bing is interviewed on "Stagecoach" set.

15/12/65 **A Bob Hope Comedy Special**
with Bing, Jack Benny, Janet Leigh and Nancy Wilson
* Do You Hear What I Hear

6/1/66 (CBC) Canada **Telescope**
Profile of Bing including interview with Fletcher Markle

2/2/66 **The American Sportsman**
Details not known

27/3/66 (Canada) recorded 7/3/66 **Timmy's Easter Parade of Stars**
described elsewhere as The Eastern Seal Show. Bing, Kathryn Crosby, Juliette, Robbie Lane & the Disciples, Art Hallman Singers are featured.
Orchestra directed by Lucio Agostini
Bing sings:-
* When The Red Red Robin Comes Bob-Bob-Bobbin' Along
* Easter Parade (parody with Juliette)
* Swinging On A Star (with child)
* The Men In My Little Girl's Life

20/4/66 (ABC) **The Road to Lebanon**
A "Danny Thomas Special." Bing with Claudine Auger, Hugh Downs & Sheldon Leonard plus "surprise" guest appearance by Bob Hope. Sponsored by Consolidated Cigar Corporation. Bing sings
* The Road to Lebanon
* Together Wherever We Go (with Danny Thomas)
* I Enjoyed Being A Girl (parody — with Claudine Auger)

1/5/66 (CBS) **The Magic of Broadcasting**
Bing, Arthur Godfrey and Lucille Ball act as hosts. Excerpts from several of Bing's films are shown.

6/6/66 **Channel 9 Kaleidoscope**
James Daly interviews Bing.

9/6/66 **Across the Seven Seas**
Bing is guest. Programme is about private air travel to lower California.

30/10/66 recorded July 1966 shown on BBC 2 **The Andy Williams Show**
Bing guests together with Tennessee Ernie Ford, the Young Americans & Kate Smith
* Medley with Andy Williams
(* In A Little Spanish Town
12/11/67 * Don't Fence Me In
* I'm An Old Cowhand
* In The Cool, Cool, Cool Of The Evening
* Swinging On A Star
* When You & I Were Young Maggie Blues)
* Medley with Kate Smith and Andy Williams (Bing takes part in: Home On The Range, This Land Of Mine, God Bless America)

16/11/66 (NBC) **The Bob Hope Comedy Special**
Bing guests and sings:-
* Typically English (with Bob Hope)
* White Christmas (snatch only)
* Pennies From Heaven
* The Second Time Around
* In The Cool, Cool, Cool Of The Evening
* A Pretty Girl Is Like A Melody (snatch only)

29/1/67 **The American Sportsman**
No details known

14/3/67 (Rediffusion) recorded Sept. 1966 **A Little Bit Of Irish**
Bing introduces various Irish entertainers (including Milo O'Shea) and sings:-
* Molly Malone
* Come Back To Erin
* Galway Bay
* Isle Of Innisfree
* McNamara's Band
* When Irish Eyes Are Smiling

13/4/67 **The Dean Martin Show**
with Polly Bergen, Don Cherry, Rowan & Martin, Les Brown and his Band of Renown. Bing guests and sings the following medley with Dean Martin:-
* Learn To Croon, Thanks, Please, Empty Saddles, I'm An Old Cowhand, I've Got A Pocketful Of Dreams, Pennies From Heaven, Swinging On A Star, Accent-tchu-ate The Positive, In The Cool, Cool, Cool Of The Evening, Personality, Love Thy Neighbour, True Love, Love Is Just Around The Corner, But Beautiful, The Second Time Around, Learn To Croon and separately with Dean and Don Cherry
* Style

4/6/67 (ABC) **The Eamonn Andrews Show**
walk-on spot at end of Bob Hope appearance

7/6/67 BBC1 **Derby Grandstand**
Bing interviewed

17/7/67 recorded Sept. 1966 **Conversations 1967-1968**
Bing talks about his family and career

Eamonn and Bing see the funny side (4/6/67)

9/10/67 **The Demon Under The Bed**
(NBC) A Danny Thomas production. Bing, Joan Collins, George Maharis and Mary Frances Crosby in a dramatic story. Bing sings:-
* Life Is Just A Bowl Of Cherries
plus snatches of:-
* When You And I Were Young, Maggie Blues
* They Had To Carry Harry To the Ferry
* The Band Played On
* On Moonlight Bay
* As Time Goes By
* Let Me Dream Again

19/10/67 **The Dean Martin Show**
Shown on BBC1 8/10/68 Bing guests with Lena Horne and Dom De Luise
* Medley with Dean Martin (Waiting For The Robert E. Lee, Alexander's Ragtime Band, Back In Your Own Backyard, Avalon, Carolina In The Morning, Is It True What They Say About Dixie, Toot-Toot-Tootsie, Alabamy Bound, Swanee, April Showers)
* Give Me The Simple Life (with Dean Martin)
* Medley with Dean Martin and Lena Horne (Bing's contribution:- There Will Never Be Another You, I Get A Kick Out Of You, They Can't Take That Away From Me, Exactly Like You, Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams, I Want To Be Happy, Why Don't We Do This More Often, Together)

25/10/67 **The Joey Bishop Show**
guest spot with Kathryn Crosby and Dorothy Lamour

21/11/67 **One Night Stands**
(ABC) Documentary narrated by Bing and spotlighting, amongst others, Woody Herman, Johnny Rivers and Fifth Dimension

25/11/67 **The Jackie Gleeson Show**
(CBS) Bing guests with Alan King and Liberace and sings:-
* Dear Hearts & Gentle People
* San Fernando Valley
* Don't Fence Me In
and a medley with Jackie Gleeson:-
Valentine, Ramona, K-K-K-Katie, Sweet Leilani, Tangerine, Marie, I Wonder What's Become Of Sally, My Gal Sal, Chloe, Frances, Mona Lisa, The Girl From Ipanima, Miss America, Girls, Girls, Girls plus a song with Gleason, Alan King and Liberace
* Thanks A Million

29/11/67 **Today**
(NBC) Bing interviewed by Hugh Downs as part of a tribute to Bob Hope

2/1/68 **The Prince of Peace**
Bing narrates the story of Christ
Guest:- Frankie Avalon

28/1/68 **The American Sportsman**
Bing & Phil Harris hunt sand grouse in Tanzania.
Bing appeared in several of these programmes, often singing parodies with Phil Harris of "Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Shean"

12/2/68 **The Bob Hope Show**
(NBC) recorded 11/2/68 "A Salute to the USO" at the New Madison Square Garden. Bing guests with Pearl Bailey and Barbara Eden. Bing acts as referee in a boxing match between Bob Hope and Rocky Marciano and also sings:-
* My Cup Runneth Over
* Medley with Hope (Bing items:-
Buttons And Bows, Two Sleepy People, Thanks For The Memory, The Road To Morocco and Put It There, Pal)
N.B. Bing sang several more songs at the show itself but these were not included in the TV presentation. The live show was also known as "The Night Of The Century"

5/5/68 **The Ed Sullivan Show**
(CBS) recorded 11/2/68 An 80th birthday tribute to Irving Berlin. Bing sings:-
* Marie From Sunny Italy
* Call Me Up Some Rainy Afternoon
* The International Rag
* Alexander's Ragtime Band
* My Wife's Gone To The Country
* Everybody's Doin' It
* White Christmas

16/5/68 **Nightline**
A Tribute to Irving Berlin. Features Bing, Guy Lombardo, Rudy Vallee, Ginger Rogers, Fred Astaire and Ethel Merman.

29/5/68 **Salute To Bob Hope**
Guest spot. Details not known.

23/10/68 **The Bing Crosby Special**
(NBC) with Diana Ross And The Supremes, Bob Hope, Dorothy Lamour (cameo only),

Shown on BBC1 31/12/68

Jose Feliciano and Stella Stevens
* Making Movies (with Bob Hope)
* Believe Me When I Say You're Looking Great (with Bob Hope)
* "Paint Your Wagon" Medley with The Supremes (I'm On My Way, I Talk To The Trees, They Call The Wind Maria)
* Mama Don't Allow It (with Jose Feliciano)
* When A Girl Comes To Hollywood (with Stella Stevens)
* That Face
• What The World Needs Now Is Love (few bars only)
* Medley with The Supremes and Jose Feliciano (Bing's contribution:- Do You Know The Way To San Jose, Eleanor Rigby, By The Time I Get To Phoenix, The Fool On The Hill, Gentle On My Mind, Hey Jude, And I Love Her, Hold Me Tight, Those Were The Days)

?/1/69 **Hall of Fame Awards**
Bing acts as host.

14/2/69 **Here Come The Stars**
George Jessel "roasts" Bing with Dorothy Lamour, Phil Harris, Rich Little and Dorothy Kirsten

15/2/69 (ABC) **Feelin' Groovy at Marine World**
Bing tours Marine World at Redwood City, California with Kathryn Crosby and Anissa (Buffy) Jones plus the singing "Rascals". Bing sings:-
* It's A New Dawn, It's A New Day
* 59th Street Bridge Song (Feeling Groovy)
* Medley with Anissa "Buffy" Jones (Three Little Fishes, I Love The Look Of You, Smiles, You Couldn't Be Cuter, The Way You Look Tonight, Three Little Fishes)

17/2/69 shown on BBC1 31/12/69 **The Bob Hope Special**
Bing guests with George Burns, Martha Raye, Diana Ross and the Supremes
* When The Red, Red, Robin Comes Bob-Bob-Bobbin' Along
* We Like Working With Each Other (duet with Hope)

9/3/69 **American Sportsman**
Bing and Gaylord Perry (pitcher for San Francisco Giants) are after quail in the countryside near Pinehurst N.C.
* Downtown (parody)
* Up A Lazy River (parody)
* Come To Tanzania (with Phil Harris)
* Carolina In The Morning (parody)

4/10/69 (CBS) recorded 15/19 Sep **The Jackie Gleason Show**
"The Honeymooners in Hollywood"
Bing makes a guest appearance and sings:-
* There's Nothing That I Haven't Sung About
* You Gotta Be You (with Jackie Gleason and Ed Norton)

3/11/69 recorded 14/17 Oct shown on BBC2 5/7/70 **The Carol Burnett Show**
Bing guests with Ella Fitzgerald plus Rowan and Martin.
* Flattery (with Carol Burnett)
* Medley with Ella Fitzgerald (Moon River, Buttons & Bows, In The Cool, Cool Of The Evening, Swinging On A Star, Call Me Irresponsible, Thanks For The Memory)
* We're Funny Men

Carol and Ella with Bing

6/11/69 **Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In**
Brief guest spot.

6/11/69 recorded 28/9/69 **The Dean Martin Show**
Bing guests with Eva Gabor, Jack Gilford and Dom De Luise.
* The Straight Life
* Hi Neighbour (with Dean)
* Medley with Dean Martin (Let Me Sing And I'm Happy, Mississippi Mud, I'm A Ding Dong Daddy From Dumas, Little Old Lady, Gotta Date With An Angel, Humba Humba, Let Me Sing And I'm Happy)

17/12/69 (NBC) 22/28 Nov **Bing & Carol — Together Again For The First Time**
A Bing Crosby special with Carol Burnett, Juliet Prowse and Roy Clark
* Together Again For The First Time (with cast, includes snatches by Bing of I've Grown Accustomed To Her Face" and "Remember")
* Give Me The Jing, Jing, Jing Of The Jingle Bells
* One Little Word — Married (with Carol Burnett)
* Nashville Cats (with Roy Clark)
* Try A Little Kindness (with Roy Clark)
* Pickin' And Grinnin' (with Roy Clark)
* You Mustn't Be Discouraged (with Carol Burnett)
* If My Friends Could See Me Now (with Juliet Prowse)
* Here's To Us (with Juliet Prowse)
* Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas (with Carol Burnett)
* Medley with cast (Bing sings:- Try To Remember, Never On Sunday,

Moon River, Sunrise Sunset, The Girl From Ipanima, Up Up And Away, Little Green Apples, Aquarius)
* White Christmas
* Together Again For The First Time (with cast)

18/12/69 **The Bob Hope Show**
Guest spot. Details not known

16/2/70 (NBC) **The Bob Hope Chrysler Special**
Bing guests with Ray Bolger, Johnny Cash and Raquel Welch
The show includes excerpts from the Eisenhower Medical Centre benefit held at the Waldorf-Astoria on 27/1/70
* Love's Been Good To Me
* There's Nothing That I Haven't Sung About
* Medley with Bob Hope (Buttons & Bows, Two Sleepy People, Thanks For The Memory, The Road To Morocco, Put It There, Pal)
* Parodies with Hope, Raquel Welch and Ray Bolger (You're The Top, The Girl That I Marry, Mame, Once In Love With Amy — parody)

8/2/70 **The American Sportsman**
Bing and Bud Boyd fishing salmon in Iceland.
* The Land Of The Midnight Sun

26/2/70 and 27/2/70 **The Movie Game**
Host: Sonny Fox. With Bing, Margaret O'Brien & R.V. Archard. No songs.

31/3/70 recorded 16/6/69 **Goldilocks**
A mixture of film and animation.
* Take A Longer Look
* The Human Race (with Kathryn Crosby)
* Take A Longer Look (with cast)

1/4/70 (NBC) **Bing Crosby — Cooling It**
A Bing Crosby Special with Dean Martin, Flip Wilson and Bernadette Peters
* Cooling It
* Leisure Time
* Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head
* Turn Around (with Bernadette Peters)
* Medley with Dean Martin (Breezing Along With The Breeze, Give Me The Simple Life, Bidin' My Time, Lazy Day, Gone Fishin', Lazy River, Enjoy Yourself, Breezing Along With The Breeze)
* There's A New World Coming
* Cooling It

12/4/70 **American Sportsman**
Bing reports on the sportsman's idea of conservation of natural resources.

16/7/70 **Happy Days**
with Bing, Louis Nye, Lionel Hampton, Jack Benny and Mary Livingstone. No songs.

25/11/70 BBC **This Is Your Life**
Bob Hope is the "life" and Bing makes a short appearance.

29/11/70 **The John Wayne TV Special — Swing Out, Sweet Land**
for Budweiser Beer. A heavily made-up Bing plays the role of Mark Twain in a scene. Bing also sings:-
* Huckleberry Finn
* God Bless America (with entire cast)

16/12/70 (NBC) **Bing Crosby's Christmas Show**
for the Bell System Family Theatre with the Crosby family, Melba Moore, Jack Wild and the Doodletown Pipers.
* Christmas Is Here To Stay
* Do You Hear What I Hear
* Christmas Is For Children
* The Feast Of Fools (Bing narrates and sings a chorus or two)
* Ho, Ho, Ho, Merry Christmas (forms part of sketch with Melba Moore)
* Sleigh Ride
* Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas (snatch only)
* We Wish You A Merry Christmas
* O Holy Night
* Joy To The World (with cast)
* White Christmas (with cast)

THE WAY WE WERE

This is the section of the magazine where we take a look back at what various Bing magazines were saying in years gone by. To tie in with the TV listing, we have picked an article from Ralph Harding's Crosby Collector of April 1968 when Fred Romary reviewed Bing's TV show "The Demon Under The Bed".

Sunken in my armchair, oblivious of a hair-spray commercial, I have just seen "Demon Under The Bed". An hour of exceptional television brought into our homes by Danny Thomas. I've seen Bing perform and thrilled to his Frank Elgin, his "Man On Fire", his "Little Boy Lost", his drunken Doc — but I've just seen them all again showcased within a Bing I've never seen before. So perfect for the part of a losing actor-singer who's about to lose what little is remaining, that it was unbearable to watch the last act. Bing was an ageing singer fighting to make peace with himself. In the cast, George Maharis as Phil Pearson, Joan Collins as ex-wife Myra Castle, to Bing's Charlie Castle, and a newcomer to the TV Theatre, Mary Frances Crosby who plays the lonely child of the split family. This young lady stepped off a diving board in the second act to take her place behind the footlights. If you weren't strong, she tore your heart out. It's her Dad's talent all over again!

Bing and his young daughter look for "The Demon Under The Bed"

Faced with a throat operation, Charlie has to find himself in one night, or it's curtains. Act 3 is the highlite — and here I broke out in a cold sweat watching Bing on stage after hours, with a half torn down set and a night light, running the course of every emotional level. He sang a couple of songs, danced, gave forth with dramatic scene after scene until he couldn't stand up any longer. This act is topped off with a liquor-laden Charlie trying to knife Pearson, being thrown across the room into a heap of photographers' lights and to rise again and cry after picturing the distorted pictures of fear that Phil Pearson had taken.

Certainly producer Stan Kallis, director Pete Tewksbury and writer Dick Dekoker gave television something that will stop the millions who view it, from referring to it as the Boob-Tube. But they couldn't have done it without Bing, who turned the script into sheer magic. "Demon" should have been extended into movie length.

Fred Romary

(Editor: We rarely hear much about this show and I have never seen it or even heard an audio version of it. It certainly sounds as though it was a marvellous performance by Bing and it would be great if the show turned up on TV some time.)

Bert Bishop's BING ON THE BOX

Okay, so I know it's the summer season, and too much shouldn't be expected from the exploiters of Logie Baird's mini-miracle at this time of the year, but only two films of direct interest to the readers of this magazine is slicing the cake far too thinly. One can only hope they are saving the Crosby fare for the post holiday period when the viewing public, bronzed or rusty, has returned from its adventurous perambulations. Though I read somewhere that the first episode of 'Lady Chatterley' attracted an audience of fourteen million viewers . . . or should that be voyeurs? I can't answer for the other 13,999,999 but I really would have preferred, especially, an early Bing movie! So what has been shown since last we forgathered here?

ROBIN AND THE SEVEN HOODS BBC 1.50 p.m. April 22nd

HIGH TIME CH4 2.00 p.m. June 1st

It's only a little over a year ago that BBC1 last screened the updated medieval legend and, in any case, probably some ninety percent of ICC members have purchased the commercial release of this entertaining romp through the Sherwood Forest of Chicago. "Don't Be A Do-Badder" has all the Bing-with-children ingredients that we came to expect from his avuncular character; and many have voiced the opinion, myself among them, that the song "Style" doesn't come alive until Bing emerges avec straw hat and cane. But "Mister Booze" remains the highlight of the film for me. How succinctly the late Sammy Davis Jnr. described that sequence in the 16-part radio tribute to Bing some years ago now.

'HIGH TIME' . . . "Tedious musical comedy with an embarrassed Bing Crosby and an uninspiring plot about a 51-year-old widower who goes to college. On the plus side there's "The Second Time Around", an Oscar nominated song from Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen . . . " Thus Derek Winnert, the film reviewer for 'Radio Times'. Hmmm! From a Crosbyphile's standpoint that's a hard hitting summary, and whilst I wouldn't want to be quite so direct it's a statement with which I have some difficulty in disagreeing. From day one, in films, Bing has always come across as a 'natural', and apart from a few out of character roles that were foisted upon him, a persona ficta in whom you could believe. Unfortunately, no other participant in this Blake Edwards boner bore any resemblance to reality. Nicole Maurey came over as being so wooden that she probably used Ronseal for lipgloss, and one can only blame the director (known principally for his brilliant Pink Panther films . . . and 'Breakfast At Tiffany's') for this lack of credibility. The jokes were predictable and, let's face it, corny. Not that there's anything wrong with a little corn provided you separate the wheat from the chaff. There was the rare and novel sight of Bing 'topless', undergoing bondage and 'in drag', and even if Bing *wasn't* embarrassed there were times when I was for him. What a pity Edwards de-valued Bing's box office appeal by limiting him to just the one song, particularly with Sammy Cahn on the scene: a great lyricist; definitely under-employed in this disappointing picture.

The second time around for Bing in High Time

During the Clive James TV series 'FAME IN THE 20th CENTURY', which was screened in the early part of the year Bing, on the 20th January, was given a favourable sequence. Not quite so generous in time as afforded those architects of human misery, Hitler and Mussolini, but comparing favourably with Johnny Weissmuller and Shirley Temple for example. There were two principle clips; Bing singing "I'm Going Hollywood" from the film of that title and, similarly, "Pennies From Heaven". "His extraordinary fame was based on his being an ordinary guy." was the theme of C.J.'s comments, which I am unable to quote verbatim as having rewound the tape to a point some time before Bing was featured my VCR chewed it up and spat it out. (I think it was those Nuremburg rally rantings that stuck in its throat!) However, I was left with the impression that Mr. James is a definite Crosbyphile! An excellent series which may well have been released commercially. I wonder how many members have seen the 1989 film 'BLOODHOUNDS OF BROADWAY'. Set in the dying moments of the 'Twenties the movie is a light, musical parody based on Damon Runyon characters. One of the songs featured, complete with verse, is "I Surrender, Dear", with an almost note-for-note Gus Arnheim arrangement as used in Bing's 1931 recording. It is sung in the film by two Runyonesque dames, Hortense Hathaway and Lovey Lou. Hortense being played by Madonna. Madonna sings Bing! Whatever next!

Whilst his appearances on the box have been few and far between recently, happily, we still have our wireless sets to bring Bing's voice into our lives other than through our own resources, often in an expansive look at the Crosby career. One such review, which has only recently come to our attention, was a programme devised and presented by Frank Wappat a year ago as I write. Called 'The Jazzin' Bing Crosby — Bing Crosby With Some Of His Jazz Friends, this was ninety minutes of knowledgeable Crosbyana on Frank's BBC North night network 8.30 to 10 p.m. spot under the general title of 'Stars on 78'. Frank stressed the superior sound of Decca masters over U.K. Brunswick releases suggesting that they were what he was using to illustrate his programme; however I'm of the opinion that everything came from compact disc, though I'm open to correction of course. Commencing with the influence of the jazz personnel employed by Paul Whiteman, The King Of Jazz; a misnomer that Frank made haste to point out; he went on to feature many of the classic recordings of the genre with intelligent and informative linking dialogue. Whilst Whiteman may not have been the King of Jazz he was certainly King of the jazz age, and we must be grateful that Bing's formative years in music were under the auspices of such an influential monarch as this very interesting programme so aptly demonstrated.

Most of the regular presenters of what has come to be called 'easy listening' music (which is not a bad description considering that the current alternative is impossibly difficult and incomprehensble to our musically attuned ears) readily and regularly feature tracks from new Bing compact discs. As always, Benny Green is no exception. Like him or loathe him it has to be said that at least he does present to the listening public some of Bing's best recordings from his most mellifluous decade — the 'Thirties. With the release of Legacy label's '16 Most Requested Songs' Mr. Green discovered "a time capsule" which transported him back to his grandmother's kitchen where he played merry hell with her wind-up Victrola by the sound of it. Off centre holes with a meat skewer in Bing 78's indeed. No wonder he found them "miserable". As his principle preoccupation is with composers . . . which is what his programme is primarily about . . . he found quite a lot on this CD to get enthusiastic about. Perhaps 'enthusiastic' is overdoing it a bit but it was pleasing to hear his comments as he featured "Let's Put Out The Lights", "I've Got The World On A String' and "Love Thy Neighbour". Prefacing that last number with a dissertation on the film 'WE'RE NOT DRESSING', whence it came, Benny Green commented that James Barrie, the author of the novel 'The Admirable Crichton', upon which the film is based, received no credit for the picture. He has obviously overlooked the fact that in the screenplay Carole Lombard does refer to Bing as "the admirable Crichton". Be that as it may Benny Green found the contents of the CD to be "a very potent brew" which I think means he liked it! He has also reviewed 'The EP Collection' CD and found it to be rather like the curate's egg, that is, good in parts. They say there is no such thing as bad publicity. That may well be true but there will always be a percentage of the listening public who will take his views as being fact rather than opinion. Bing's memory will certainly survive without Benny Green, but I forgive him his caustic comments whilst he continues to play tracks like "I Found A Million Dollar Baby", "With Every Breath I Take" and "It Had To Be You".

You have already heard about the superb Alan Dell tribute and one of the several other presenters to remember the ninetieth anniversary of Bing's birth was Trevor Littlechild of BBC Radio Cambridgeshire. A forty-five minute tribute featuring quite a selection of non-commercial material which had been supplied by such stalwarts as Stan White, Leslie Gaylor and Ernest Sutkowski. Trevor is another who diligently delves into the history of vintage recordings and regularly makes credited use of John McNicholas's 'The Chronological Bing Crosby' LP series. The greatest project in the history of collected Crosbyana say I; sadly terminating just when it was on the threshold of that most wonderful period in Bing's recording career. (Is there *any* chance at all you can continue on compact disc, John?) However, to return to Mr. Littlechild. He began with "Thanks" and made a reference to that other Bing monosyllable title, "Please", two titles which, it has been suggested, apart from being the nicest words in the English language, were a crie de coeur to end Prohibition and the response when they did! From thereon the broadcast was a mini-musical biography continuing with "I've Got The Girl" through a clutch of songs and radio memories, and a couple of personalised tapes from Bing, to the fade out on the original version of "Where The Blue Of The Night". A comfortable programme to listen to. John Gunn's '78 Vintage' is another programme that's a pleasure to catch and his weekly Crosby Corner throws up a few gems as well as the run of the mill Bing tracks. His 90th tribute was the 'contest' between Bing and Frank Sinatra, judged by Bob Hope, for the title Top Canary. Going round the dial it's well worth listening to Hubert 'Shaving Mirror' Gregg's 'Thanks for The Memory', Ronnie Hilton's 'Sounds Of The 50's', 'The Vintage Years' by Desmond Carrington, the Richard Spendlove and Peter Moreton programme and, of course, Sounds Easy with Alan Dell. There's a lot of radio show material being featured these days mainly on account of its release on compact disc and in recent months the most popular of this has been Bing with the mesdames Lee and Fitzgerald; with the first named "The Possibility's There" and with Ella "That's A-Plenty" being the most played. However, I nominate the commercial release of "Dinah" as the holder of the 'most regularly played Bing track' on radio, a definite contender for Bing's all-time number one jazz recording. See you at Christmas!

Bert Bishop

ONE MORE SUNRISE

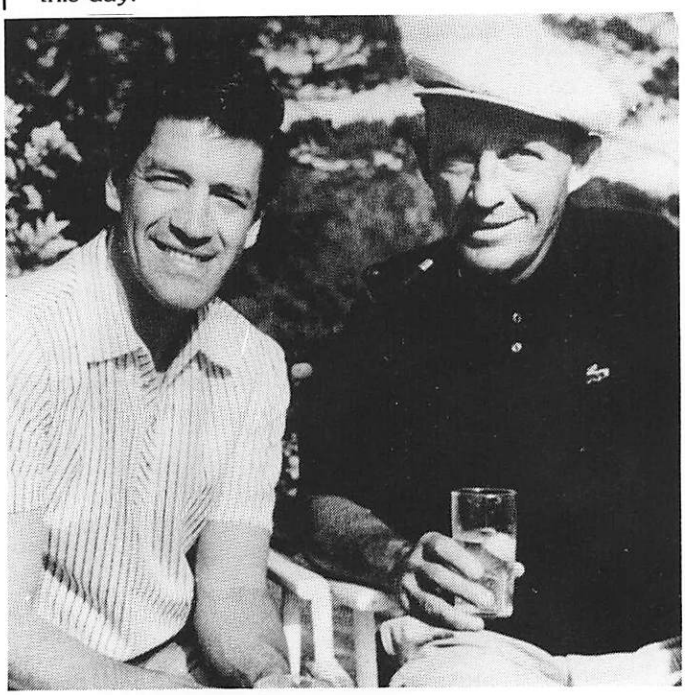
The article "One Week in 1944" (BING 99) looked at the events of 25-31 August 1944, Bing's first week of professional activity in the UK. In similar vein, Ken Crossland now focuses upon a day in 1960, when Bing spent the day in the company of Michael Holliday.

Saturday. 15 October 1960. At home in "Dailson", his large Georgian style house on the outskirts of Croydon, Michael Holliday awakes to breakfast in bed from his wife, Margie. The "Daily Mirror" is on Mike's breakfast tray and as he skims through it, Mike is struck by a picture of Bing, arriving in London the previous day.

As Norman Milne growing up in Liverpool, Holliday had spent his youth idolising Bing. Later in the Merchant Navy, young Norman had discovered that he possessed the ability to sound uncannily like his idol. In time, this led to a professional career with the Eric Winstone band, before going solo in 1955. Early TV appearances on shows such as "The Centre Show" and "More Contrary" brought Michael Holliday to the attention of a rapidly growing TV audience.

Radio and records followed and titles such as "Yellow Rose Of Texas", "Nothin' To Do" and "Gal With The Yaller Shoes" found their way into the Hit Parade. 1958 however was Holliday's big year. In January, "The Story Of My Life" provided him with his first No. 1, whilst in the same month, his first featured TV series "Relax With Michael Holliday", began. The successes of 1958 placed Michael Holliday at the pinnacle of British showbusiness.

At heart however, he remained the unassuming young Liverpudlian, not quite believing and never coming to terms with his success. What's more, his idolatry of Bing never wavered and for Mike, one of the benefits of becoming a "star" was that it put him in contact with many of the leading British Crosby collectors. Fred Reynolds, Les Gaylor and Frank Murphy all became regular correspondents with Mike, but it was with Stan White that a particular friendship developed. Fortunately for us, Mike and Stan corresponded by tape rather than letter — tapes which have survived to this day.



Mike and Bing in California, 1959

In 1959, Mike had travelled to California for his first meeting with Bing — in part orchestrated by Stan. Now a year later, he found Bing on his doorstep, an opportunity that was surely too good to miss.

Mike set about the task of finding Bing. His first call to Claridges brought no joy, so Mike tried the Savoy. The receptionist recognised the voice, turned out to be a Holliday fan, and put him through.

Holliday was something of a tape recorder buff and he had taken the precaution of setting his machine to catch any conversation with Bing. Amazingly, that tape has also survived in part, enabling us to relive that early Saturday morning conversation.

"Hiya Michael, how ya doin' " says Bing, before Mike has even realised that he is through. Mike's response is that of the Crosby fan rather than the fellow professional — "Oh, boy!" is his first response. In between some small talk about how Mike had come to know that Bing was in England (when Mike tells Bing that there's a "great" picture of him in the paper, Bing's response is "impossible"!), Bing lets it slip that "I have to record today". At that you can almost hear Mike's eyes popping out of his head — "Record what, where?" "I dunno", says Bing "they're picking me up at 10.00."

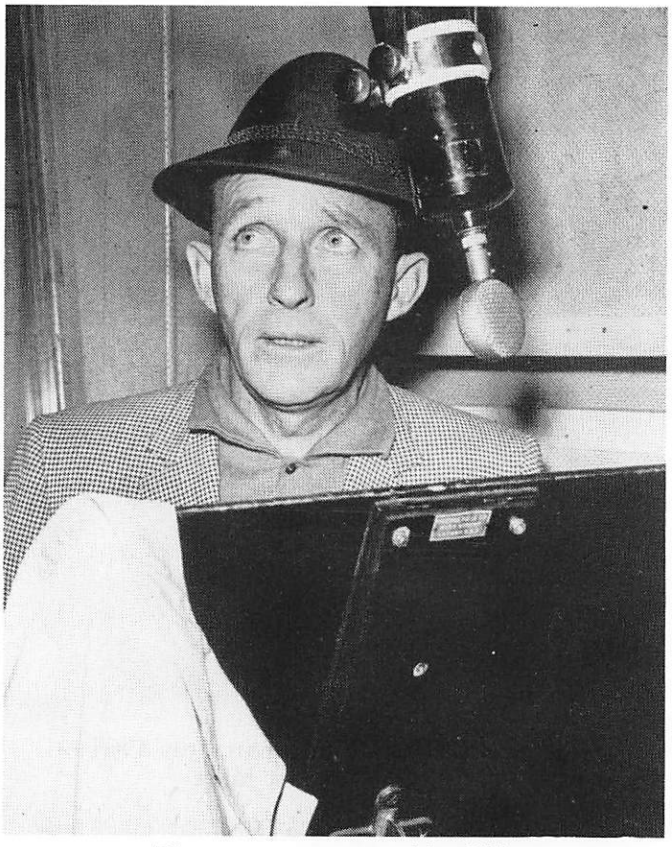
No sooner has the call ended with Bing telling Mike "I'll call ya — love to the missus", than Mike is onto the task of finding out where Bing is working. Calls to various friends in the music business reveal that Bing is due at the Decca Studios in West Hampstead.

Without further ado, Mike is in his car and on his way. Later, as he recalls the events of the day to Stan White, he finds amusement in the confusion that was caused by a major Columbia recording artiste turning up unannounced at the studios of their major rival, Decca.

By the time that Mike arrived, the session was already well underway, with Bing on his third song. The session had begun around 10.45 a.m., and was the first session for the album "Holiday In Europe", which was eventually issued by Decca the following year. Just as Michael Holliday's tape to Stan White tells us of the build up, the efforts of a diligent recording engineer also enable us to hear what went on in the studio.

Bing was programmed to record four songs. The first two of these — "C'Est Si Bon" and "Under Paris Skies" had an obvious French theme to them, in keeping of course with the overall concept of the album. Bing sailed through three or four takes of each title, and with these seemingly safe "in the can", turned his attention to song number three — "One More Sunrise".

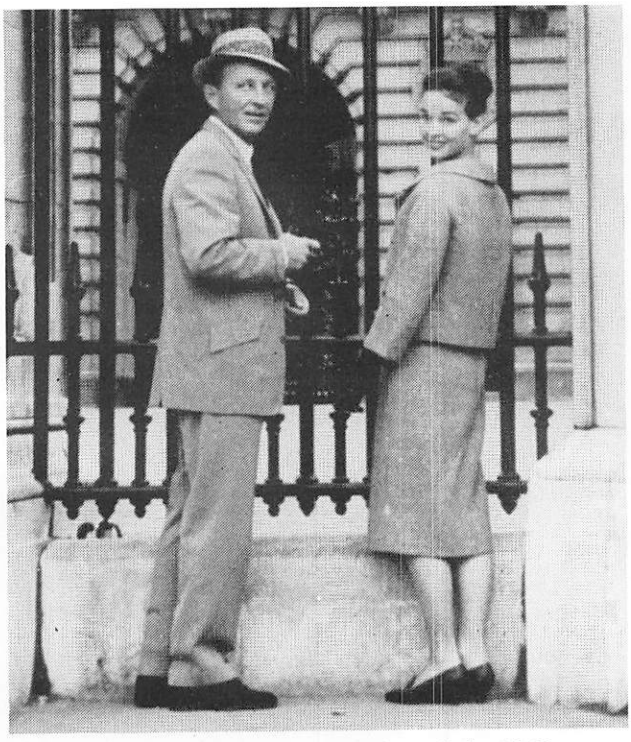
A relatively modern song which had featured in both the US and UK charts the previous year, it provided Bing with the choice of two completely different sets of lyrics. Bing's first two attempts used the "Sunrise" lyrics which had been part of the UK hit recorded by Dickie Valentine. Bing however, seems ill at ease with them, and suggests a change to how "the German did it". The "German" in question was one Ivo Robic, who if the truth be known, was actually a Yugoslav. His version of "Morgen" (the German word for "tomorrow") reached No. 13 in the US charts in August 1959 and was presumably better known to Bing. One take with these alternative lyrics is made before Bing goes on to song number four, another French sounding title, "Melancolie". "Smoke up fellas", says Bing to the band "I need to learn this cat". Learn it he does, although never quite seems to come to terms with the melody. The first takes all come to grief at the same point shortly after the orchestral break. "Whoops", says Bing at one point, ". . . slipped on my affaire". When Bing then repeats the mistake again however, his patience slips — "Dirty rat bastard — I'll be a sonofabitch" says our man — and as an afterthought "Hope there aren't any ladies in the control booth".



Bing — as witnessed by Mike

Ladies there aren't but Michael Holliday there was, taking in every detail of his idol at work. As the session ends with a none too perfect take of "Melancolie", Bing comes into the booth to check on arrangements for an interview with Wilfred Thomas which he is also due to record (and which also had a subsequent commercial release). "Is that old Holliday" is his greeting to Mike, and the pair of them chatted again for a few minutes, during which Bing revealed that he was due to play golf that afternoon at Coombe Hill.

No sonner had Bing left than Mike realised that he had forgotten to give Bing a folder containing some photographs which he had brought along. Mike goes on to describe a Mack Sennett like situation in which he chases Bing's Rolls, hooting and waving the envelope to Bing! When he catches him to hand over the photos, Bing tells him that he has left another folder of letters and such in the studio, and could Mike go back and have it sent onto the Savoy.



Bing and Kathryn in London, July 1960 — as delivered by Mike

Once again, the Crosby fan within Mike takes over. Not only does he go back and collect the folder, but he sees the opportunity for a further meeting with Bing that afternoon. Sure enough, three or four hours later, Mike accompanied by Margie, his wife, meets Bing on Coombe Hill Golf Course!

Bing's golfing party included Val Parnell, of "Sunday Night At The London Palladium" fame. "You should put Michael on the Palladium", Bing says to Parnell. "Never mind that", comes Mike's reply, "I want you to put *him* on the Palladium". "Oh, I'm through" says Bing. How little did he know.

A remarkable day, with a remarkable amount of the day's events captured on tape. The "Holiday In Europe" album came to pass the following year, although only the orchestral tracks from that October session appeared in the final release. Bing re-recorded the four vocals, along with eight other titles in Hollywood in May 1961. Listening to the takes of that October session, one can't help but conclude that it was all too rushed. It would be fourteen years before Bing would venture again into a UK recording studio.

The friendship between Bing and Mike continued to develop and Bing's prolonged stay in England during 1961 for the filming of "Road To Hong Kong" provided further opportunities for Mike to pursue his mentor.

By 1961 however, the struggle of maintaining a lifestyle that seemed alien to him, was catching up on Mike. His public image of easy-going relaxtion couldn't have been further removed from the private Michael Holliday. In August 1961, he suffered a nervous breakdown and spent some time in a psychiatric hospital. Although he continued his career, he never recovered. By 1963, his marriage to Margie had seen several separations, his health was poor and he was being pursued for tax arrears. Other rumours persist about his involvement with the London gangland protection racket, fuelled by his friendship with Freddie Mills.

It was at Freddie Mills' Charing Cross club, that Holliday arrived late on Monday 28 October. He sang a few impromptu songs for his host but when asked to return the following evening he told Mills that he wouldn't be coming back and that he intended to finish it that night. Talk of suicide was by now not uncommon from Mike, and there had been previous attempts, although none of them perhaps genuinely serious. Mills and his wife Chrissie, talked to Mike for some time and thought they had talked him round.

Michael Holliday left the club in the early hours, accompanied by a ski instructor whom he had met on a recent season in Jersey. Mike and Margie had parted again two months previously and it was to an empty "Dailson" that the two of them returned.

Around 6 a.m. Mike went outside to retrieve a bag from his car. Returning upstairs, he slipped and fell unconscious. He was admitted to Croydon General Hospital and found to have taken a massive overdose of sleeping tablets. Doctors fought all day to save him, and just when they thought they had, Michael Holliday died at 5.30 p.m. on 29 October 1963.

"He was a loyal and true friend", said Bing in his message to the benefit concert for Mike's son in April 1964 . . . "I shall miss him."

Ken Crossland

(Editor: A timely reminder of the impending 30th anniversary of Michael Holliday's passing. I hope the radio stations will remember the occasion.)

Derek Parkes' Crosby Collectors Club

Inexplicably there has been a sudden increase in the release of Bing CDs and the promise of more to come. They vary from completely new compilations to the simple reissue of LPs as CDs. There are many young collectors and, surprisingly, many well established collectors who still require commercial material — records made for and sold to the general public. Of course, the more progressive are happy to replace their LPs with the far more convenient CDs often, but not always, with an improvement in the sound. Happily, releases on CD are introducing many of

you to the wealth of material that was heard only on radio. Literally thousands of songs have been preserved in one form or another . . . not always in pristine condition but modern audio engineering can work near miracles in making the sound acceptable and enjoyable to most. A few, mainly hi-fi buffs, expect miracles. Almost certainly, they will remain unhappy as modern methods cannot fully compensate for the limitations of recording techniques associated with vintage material. Often records exist only as coarse grained shellac pressings — the original metal parts having long since corroded. Unfortunately, the small returns from limited sales have a direct effect in limiting the amount of money that can be spent on restoration . . . but what is restoration?

Sound Restoration When sound is recorded it is stored in a variety of forms . . . on disc, optical film, tape or digitally as a series of numbers. All are subject to deterioration due to ageing, wear and tear, damage but also the sound is modified by the limitations of the recording techniques and the medium in which the sound is stored. Fortunately, Bing collectors are not concerned with pre-electric recordings. Early electric recordings added much bass, that was missing from previous accoustic recordings, but for a couple of decades the upper frequency of electrical recordings was limited to around 6000Hz (cycles per second). Even LPs are limited in the majority of cases to just one additional octave (12,000Hz) whereas young people can ususally hear up to 16,000Hz or higher.

Restoration is essentially the recovery of as much of the full audio spectrum as is possible and at the same time rectifying troughs and peaks to make the sound as natural as possible. Unfortunately, bass extension introduces rumble whereas treble extension increases record and tape hiss. Rumble is minimised by limiting the extreme bass. Hiss is produced by the particulate nature of the recording medium. These particles are so small that invariably they affect just one wall of a record groove. If a mono recording is reproduced as per stereo (this also applies to tape recordings), peaks in any one channel are due to noise which can be eliminated. Recombing the channels eliminates the noise due to the vertical movements of the stylus. Also of major importance in the very first place is to ensure that the reproducing stylus exactly matches the size of the groove. Specially shaped stylii are used to improve the higher frequencies. Major blips, due to scratches and large particulate matter in the shellac, can be removed by literally cutting them out of a tape copy but it is better to simply scratch off the click by removing the oxide from the tape — leaving enough to make the residual noise blend in with the music. Hiss can be reduced by restricting the frequencies above those of the recorded music and also by reducing the volume on the silent gaps in the music. Much of this can be done digitally and more. The sharp rise time of the minute click due to the particals in shellac and the oxide of tape can be detected and modified. Music normally has a more gentle waveform and is USUALLY unaffected . . . but systems like 'CEDAR' and 'NO NOISE' can and do modify the sound. Frequency equalisation has to be done manually and aurally. Thus the sound of any recording is dependent on the hearing, the equipment in use, and the whims of the audio-engineer. If he is elderly he may not hear that all so intrusive hiss that young people dislike and so the higher frequencies, and much of the hiss, are not reduced. Younger people much prefer the use of 'CEDAR' type filtering but often this does little for the elderly who often hear only the increased sound distortion. Playing around with frequencies on two channels can simulate stereo (Robert Parker) . . . very pleasant and enjoyable to many but the boost of certain frequencies can clearly illustrate the shortcomings of early (perhaps worn) originals, frequently making distortion obvious and offputting. On top of all these variables the various collectors have a whole heap of hearing problems, peaks and troughs — and their own individual preferences. Experience has shown that the same recording can be praised as being near to perfect by many, acceptable by the majority, considered noisy by one or two and even rejected by one as being useless. That has happened to the CCC's best selling CD, 'On Treasure Island'!

Restoration is not an easy art but nevertheless, is well worth the effort. Even with modern recordings the sound is dependent on the audio engineer and all the equipment in both the recording and reproductive chain. Your equipment — especially if it is truly hi-fi — has to be adjusted to suit not only the records, but also YOUR hearing. Even with CDs, tone controls and filters — or better still, an equaliser — are essential if you are to get the sound that best suits you.

CLUB CDs

Having only just finished writing the above there seems to be little sound reason to continue with the CD project except that it is one way in which collectors can get what they want on to CD. It may appear now that collectors are being well served by the record companies. Certainly, they are doing much better but a closer look at what is being released reveals that collectors are the emotive force behind most of the issues. In many ways collectors prefer the higher fidelity that should be available from the parent company but so often they suffer from tunnel vision and can see little more than the 'best sellers'. Tell me how many collectors have the 45, or so, different CDs on which 'White Christmas' has appeared!

Support for the issue of Club CDs is gradually increasing but as yet the scheme is not quite viable. Nevertheless the decision has been taken to produce the first CD in the knowledge that interest will increase once people see the contents and hear the quality of the first release. Unfortunately the CCC is limited to what can be issued legally but that still gives us a choice from 3000 plus titles!

Having just illustrated how difficult it is to revitalise old recordings, it seems very foolhardy to immediately talk of doing just that. Whereas a few might be disappointed with the sound, there is no doubt that most of you will be very pleased with the result. To please the majority will be an achievement but the aim will be to please the perfectionist. Perhaps it will be more difficult to please as many with the songs selected but this will be almost entirely due to the varied tastes of the individuals. Here the onus is put on you and the restrictions imposed by copyright. Richard Hart, 'Witley', 6 Torwood Close, Torquay, Devon TQ1 1EW has agreed to collate details of the recordings that you

want to see on CD. Anything prior to 1943 may be selected. He is dealing with commercial recordings only — those issued by record companies for sale to the public. Write out a separate list of the titles that interest YOU. Put your name and address on the list and nothing more. Your letter should be quite separate from the list. Of course, most of you would like to hear completely new material by Bing and this will form the larger part of the CD programme. With something like 3000 tracks available there is no shortage of material. Furthermore, you are invited to supply material from your own collection provided that it is suitable — essentially in good condition, interesting and free of copyright restrictions. Remember that often the sound can be restored and blemishes can be removed. Sometimes it is just the idea that is needed as there is a good chance that someone., somewhere has the same material in better condition. To achieve the best results everyone needs to cooperate. There is already a substantial amount of support but more is needed to make the project financially secure. However, the first CD will go ahead — perhaps two. Many more will follow provided the scheme remains financially viable. Your support is needed. If you are not already a Member of the 'Crosby Collectors' Club' (CCC), join now. Help to make this CD project successful.

HOW TO JOIN THE CCC. Simply send £1 to

D. PARKES
66 FIRS ROAD, FIRSDOWN
SALISBURY, WILTS SP5 1SW
ENGLAND
TEL: WINTERSLOW 0980 862688

If you live overseas — simply write.

Membership is essentially free. You pay only for the 'NEWSHEET' — £0.50 per copy — plus a little extra towards overseas postage.

The object of the Club is to supply recordings by Bing no matter where they are issued. Imports are usually the cheapest in the country and many UK releases are well below the recommended retail price.

NB: Non-Members of the CCC may obtain CDs from the Club but a surcharge of £1 will be made for each disc supplied. The extra payment will be used to help finance the release of the Club's own CD.

NEW RELEASES, REISSUES OR PREVIOUS OMISSIONS

NB: Where the price is quoted, it is a guide to the normal retail price in the country of origin. Club prices may be higher (imports) but are more likely to be much lower than those shown. Most entries are shown as CDs although cassettes and occasionally LPs may also be available.

PRIME CUTS

The first item is the long awaited CD, compiled by Richard Hart, restored by John R.T. Davies, with notes by Fred Reynolds. Many ICC Members contributed suggestions for the CD so it is almost a collectors' CD. However it was released by JSP Records who, for their own reasons, chose to delay its release.

CD JSP JSPCD 704 BING CROSBY — ON TREASURE ISLAND UK £12.50

On Treasure Island
It Makes No Difference Now
When Mother Nature Sings Her Lullaby
Deep Purple
Sweetheart Of Sigma Chi
Never In A Million Years
Devil May Care
Maybe I'm Wrong Again
The Moon Was Yellow
Trade Winds
Riding Down The Canyon
Darling Nellie Gray

Playing Time: 74 minutes

Silver On The Sage
Chapel In The Valley
Sierra Sue
Ah! Sweet Mystery Of Life
Camptown Races
Beautiful Dreamer
For Love Alone
So Do I
The Singing Hills
It's Always You
Down By The River
Sweethearts

Tracks: 24

There can be no doubt about the popularity of this CD amongst Crosby collectors as the CCC sales have already exceeded any other disc. The songs are good and Fred Reynolds has provided analytical notes to help you appreciate them all the more. Dates, full master and take details will help you discover the alternative versions — even to 'The Moon Was Yellow' — DLA64-B (not DLA84 as shown on the back inlay card) — comes from the original 78 issue that was never listed in the Brunswick catalogue. The only stamper at English Decca was damaged and DLA67-B 'The Sweetheart Waltz' was substituted. The version on the EP 'Me And The Moon' and presumably on the CD 'The EP Collection' was obtained from American Decca for the EP issue. This master may be the 'A' take or it may be the 'B' take edited to remove noise by removing small pieces of the tape. There are several small timing differences between the two — mainly in the first half of the recordings. Simultaneous playing is almost essential to detect the differences as otherwise they go unnoticed. Almost everyone has raved about the excellent sound of the CD but younger people have complained about the '78' shellac hiss. Most people above 60 will have lost their upper frequency hearing so most can hear little or no hiss! One of the few advantages of getting older!

CD LIMITED COLLECTOR'S EDITION HLYCD-001 HARRY LILLIS 'STEP TO THE REAR' Far East £?

Seven Nights A Week
Man On Fire
Paris Holiday w. Bob Hope
Nothing In Common w. Bob Hope
I Couldn't Care Less
Say One For Me
The Secret Of Christmas
The Music Of Home

The Oldest Established w. Sinatra, Martin
Something Sort Of Grandish w. D. Reynolds
Younger Than Springtime
Christmas Dinner Country Style
Do You Hear What I Hear
The White World Of Winter
Far From Home
How Green Was My Valley

The New Ashmolean Marching Society
It's A Good Day
Aloha Means I Love You
Incurably Romantic
The Second Time Around
Fugue For Tinhorns w. Sinatra, Martin

Step To The Rear
What Do We Do With The World?
It's Not Where You Start
Tie A Yellow Ribbon Round The Old Oak Tree
Christmas Star
We Love Old St. Mary's

Playing Time: 74 minutes

Tracks: 28

Here we have a selection of songs sung by Harry Lillis, all of which were recorded by Bing. The impersonation is so good that most people could be fooled into thinking that this is Bing singing! Even the front inlay sheet shows a charicature which is not unlike Bing. The legend 'Step To The Rear' seems out of place, but on opening the insert one realises that this refers to Sinatra, Elvis and The Beatles with another legend '. . . and let a winner lead the way' clearly relating to our Bing impersonator, Harry Lillis. The lengthy list of songs contains many that have been missing from Bing collections and which are much sort after. Collectors who do not have the originals would be well advised to obtain a copy of this CD. The sound is more than reasonably good although 'The Oldest Established . . . ' does sound out of balance. It may be difficult to find this 'limited edition' in the shops but the Crosby Collectors' Club may have a few copies left when you read this. Disappointingly there is no stereo on this disc.

FRED ASTAIRE AND BING CROSBY — Two related but independently released CDs

CD EMI 0777 7 89312 2 5 HOW LUCKY CAN YOU GET? UK £9.00

CD CURB D2-77617 BEST OF BING CROSBY AND FRED ASTAIRE A COUPLE OF SONG AND DANCE MEN USA £6.50

C Top Billing
C How Lucky Can You Get?
C Roxie
C Spring, Spring, Spring
C It's Easy To Remember (FA)
C Change Partners (BC)
C Pick Yourself Up
C Mister Keyboard Man
I've A Shooting Box In Scotland
In The Cool Cool Cool Of The Evening
A Bon Vivant (BC)
C Sing
A Dance In The Old Fashioned Way (FA)
A I Love To Dance Like They Used To Dance (BC)
C A Couple Of Song And Dance Men
A That's Entertainment (FA)
Top Billing (Reprise)

A: Additional track to the LP 'A Couple Of Song And Dance Men'
C: The 10 titles on the Curb CD
FA: Solo by Fred Astaire
BC: Solo by Bing Crosby

Playing Time: EMI: 56 minutes
CURB: 33 minutes

Tracks: EMI: 17
CURB: 10

The Curb CD is perhaps a little disappointing as it contains three tracks less than the LP from which it comes — 'A Couple Of Song And Dance Men' . . . and yet this is hardly a budget label at over £6. Nevertheless, it is nice to have this material on CD as the LP, and presumably the Curb CD, has tracks which differ slightly from the UK CD. To quote from the inlay sheet — 'This release (EMI) is a different — and better — presentation of the original album. For one thing it has been completely remixed from the original multi-tracks and digitally remastered using alternative takes or portions of alternative takes. And for another, it offers four bonus solo tracks taken from other albums — these also were digitally remixed from the original multi-tracks. And of prime interest to Crosby collectors is the premiere release of his much sought-after first take of 'Change Partners'.'

CD CASTLE COMMUNICATIONS MAT CD 253 THE BEST OF BING CROSBY UK £4.00

Sunday
They Didn't Believe Me
This Can't Be Love
I Can't Get Started
I Guess I'll Have To Change My Plan
Try A Little Tenderness
What Is This Thing Called Love
Mandy
So Rare
My Ideal
Don't Take Your Love From Me
The Tender Trap
Love Is Just Around The Corner
It's All Right With Me
Waiting For The Evening Mail
I've Got A Crush On You
I Wish You Love
Chances Are
Where Or When
What Is There To Say
It's Not For Me To Say
Crazy Rhythm
I've Grown Accustomed To Her Face
Come Rain Or Come Shine
She's Funny That Way
We're In The Money
Little Man You've Had A Busy Day
At Sundown

Playing Time: 74 minutes

Tracks: 28 Also available on cassette

As a budget release this is good value for money, excellent sound and very good songs. It contains many of the tracks not on the recently released 'Quintessential' set but how much better it would have been had this release fully complemented the two CD set making all of the Barnes's Bing/Buddy Cole material currently available. The 'Quintessential' set is now available as an Australian pressing which has the same release number as the UK release. (See the April BING for track listings.) The only obvious difference is that the Australian discs are silver whereas the UK pressings are coloured gold.

CD MUSIC INTERNATIONAL P6005 CRUISIN' ALONG USA £5

Blacksmith Blues
Come What May
Lady In The Stamp Collection
I Dreamt I Dwelt In Marble Halls
Lady Of Spain
Zipadee Doo Dah
P.S. I Love You
If This Isn't Love
Ole Buttermilk Sky
Great Day
I Got The Sun In The Morning
It's A Good Day
You Go To My Head
The Old Lamplighter

Tracks: 14

This is all radio material in not the best of condition. Thirteen of the above tracks, along with 16 others were released on the 'Everything I Have Is Yours' Double Play CD. The remaining track 'Lady In The Stamp Collection' has been issued on the Swiss Nostalgia LP '20 Golden Greats — Vol 2'. Some quite rare tracks here for the dedicated collector. A pity about the sound.

CD CRESCENDO D19691 THE RADIO YEARS — Vol 1 Australia £7
CD CRESCENDO D19692 THE RADIO YEARS — Vol 2 Australia £7

Volume One
Singing In The Rain
Young At Heart
I Can Dream Can't I
Valencia
You Belong To Me
Wish You Were Here
Moonlight Bay
Don't Let The Stars Get In Your Eyes
That's A Plenty
Answer Me, My Love
I Don't Know Why
Stranger In Paradise
Lullaby Of Broadway
Where Is Your Heart?
Surrey With A Fringe On Top
You Go To My Head
Lady Of Spain
Two To Tango
P.S. I Love You
Till We Meet Again

Playing Time Vol 1: 51 minutes
Vol. 2: 62 minutes
Tracks: Vol 1: 20
Vol 2: 25

Volume Two
Hello, Hello
Great Day
On A Slow Boat To China
That Lucky Old Sun
If I Knew You Were Comin' I'd Have Baked A Cake
Zip A Dee Doo Dah
On Top Of Old Smokey
Changing Partners
Up A Lazy River/Paper Doll
It's Only A Paper Moon
Hand Holdin' Music
Everybody Loves My Baby
You Gotta Start Off Each Day With A Song
If This Isn't Love
Louise/Mimi
Vaya Con Dios
It Might As Well Be Spring
How Are Things In Glocca Morra?
For Me And My Girl
The Jones Boy
The Old Lamplighter/It's A Good Day
Cuanto Le Gusta
I Got The Sun In The Morning
Clancy Lowered The Boom
May The Good Lord Bless And Keep You

These two CDs are identical to the American 1987 releases on Crescendo GNPD 9051/2 which may still be available. All tracks come from radio and are in such excellent sound that these must be the best CDs available of this type of material. Vol 2 must not be confused with Vol 2 on Aust. Crescendo D19080 which is a different compilation of the above material appearing on Australian LP and cassettes. Elsewhere the same material was issued on two LPs — Vols 3 and 4! The corresponding Australian Vol 1 was never issued on CD in Australia? Why not! Many other artists appear alongside Bing on the above songs which will be familiar to most from the LP releases. If these recordings are not known to you then buy the CDs. You won't regret it!

CD PARROT PARCD 003 JUDY GARLAND WITH BING CROSBY — WHEN YOU'RE SMILING UK £10

B Am I In Love?
J You Made Me Love You
B Be My Life's Companion
D You're Just In Love
J Carolina In The Morning
D How Could You Believe Me . . .
B I'll Walk Alone
D Hello My Baby
D In My Merry Oldsmobile
D Call Me Up Some Rainy Afternoon
D Walkin' My Baby Back Home
D In My Merry Oldsmobile — parody
J Mean To Me
B Sparrow In The Treetop
J When You're Smiling
D Just The Way You Are
J Rock-A-Bye Your Baby With A Dixie Melody
D Boise, Idaho
D Blue Boy — 'My Blue Heaven' parody
D These Lush Moments
B After You've Gone
D When You Wore A Tulip
D For Me And My Girl
J Alexander's Ragtime Band
B If
J Wish You Were Here
D Limehouse Blues
B Would I Love You
J A Pretty Girl Milking A Cow
B You And Your Beautiful Eyes
D April In Paris
J You Belong To Me
D Isle Of Capri
B At Last
J Over The Rainbow

B: Bing Solo
J: Judy Solo
D: Duet:

Playing Time: 76 minutes
Tracks: 35 (Bing on 25)

This CD is only just to hand and this appraisal is based on sampling the disc at random. The songs are good, some unusual and some 'updated'. The singing is excellent and there appears to be a lot of humour. One track was recorded in 1947 and the rest 1951/2. The sound is very good but typical of American radio of that period. Comment: Too much damn typing and insufficient audition time!!!

CD PARROT PARCD 004 AL JOLSON AND BING CROSBY — LET ME SING AND I'M HAPPY UK £10

A Let Me Sing And I'm Happy
D Medley:
Back In Your Own Back Yard
You Made Me Love You
Waitin' For The Robert E. Lee
B Kate
D The Best Things In Life Are Free
A Lazy
B The New Ashmolean Marching Society
D The Anniversary Song
D When The Red, Red, Robin . . .
B I Can Dream, Can't I?
A Rock-A.Bye Your Baby
D April Showers
D Ma Blushin' Rosie
B You're Wonderful
D The One I Love
D Medley
All By Myself
Alexander's Ragtime Band
Easter Parade
B Bye, Bye Baby
A My Mammy
B Rainy Night In Rio
D Sunbonnet Sue
D A Pretty Girl Is Like A Melody
B Linda
A Swanee
D My Old Kentucky Home
T A Hot Time In The Old Town Tonight
B Nobody
Comedy
T Oh! Susannah
Comedy

D Avalon
B That Lucky Old Sun
A Toot, Toot, Tootsie

A: Al Jolson
B: Bing
D: Duet by Bing and Al
T: Trio by Bing, Al and John Charles Thomas

D In The Evening By The Moonlight
B Beautiful Dreamer
D On The Banks Of The Wabash
Comedy
T Alabamy Bound

Playing Time: 78 minutes
Tracks: 40 (Bing on 30)
'Comedy' Tracks in total

Taken from radio (1947 - 1950) this CD is another package of fun and frolic with many great, well sung songs. This is radio at its peack. The songs that you know from commercial records really take on a new dimension here — just listen to 'The New Ashmolean Marching Society' and compare it to the 'Harry Lillis' version. Both great but this one is great fun.

Parrot have to be congratulated on these two great issues marred only the the printer's errors on the inlay cards. Replacements may be available later.

3 CDs **EMI 8140792 ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK RECORDINGS** Australia ?£24
Boxed **7912482 CAN-CAN**
7912492 PAL JOEY **7937872 HIGH SOCIETY**

Featured in all three films, Frank Sinatra predominates in this excellent set of soundtrack recordings . . . but is it a set? The numbers on the individual discs suggest that the three CDs have simply been boxed together to make up a set — a good idea. All the featured artists are as per the films and the 'High Society' disc is identical to other issues in beautiful stereo sound. Some mystery surrounds this set as EMI have stated that it is not generally available. 'High Society' is not available separately but there is a slight possibility that the CCC may be able to supply copies of this single disc. Everyone must know the song titles and so there seems little point in listing the 10 tracks.

THE BEST OF THE REST

Changing from the previous policy of listing every CD on which Bing appeared, the following are listed only if three or more tracks are featured and especially if the recording is of special interest — even if only one track is present.

4 CDs **BROADWAY GOLD MCA CLASSICS MCAD4-10766** USA ?£30
Boxed **RODGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN 50th ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION**
MCAD-10049 ORIGINAL CAST — THE KING AND I
MCAD-10775 THE RODGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN COLLECTION
MCAD-10798 ORIGINAL CAST — OKLAHOMA!
MCAD-10799 ORIGINAL CAST — CAROUSEL

Bing is present only on the second disc MCAD-10775:

Oh What A Beautiful Morning w. Trudy Erwin
The Loneliness Of Evening
No Other Love (L7160)
There's Music In You

A nice selection of Bing's recordings . . . but what about the track of 'No Other Love' recorded by Bing with Gordon Jenkins and his Orchestra on 21 APR 53? It is not listed in 'Bing — Just For The Record'. The Trotter version was recorded some eight months later. According to the accompanying booklet the earlier version was issued on DE 28746 (single). What is the reverse side? Were there other titles recorded at this session?

4 CAS **RADIO YESTERYEAR 4CMR-9 WARTIME HIT PARADE** USA ?£8
Boxed (Cassettes labelled 4CSH-5)

Tape 1: Hip, Hip Hooray — with Chorus — probably The Music Maids
Tape 2: I'll Get By — with John Scott Trotter
Tape 3: The Amphibious Battle Hymn (Goin' In) — with The Sportsmen Quartet (? Glee Club)
Tape 4: Bless 'Em All — with ? The Music Maids

Tracks: 64

Almost certainly these come from the Kraft Music Hall radio programmes although the third item is not shown in Morgereth's book 'Bing Crosby . . . ' Perhaps it originally appeared on one of the many Armed Forces Radio Shows or some other War Department disc. Almost certainly much of this material will be new to you. 'Bless 'Em All' is not the same as the unissued V-Disc test pressing which is in the writer's possession. This version includes an appeal for people to buy War Bonds — interestingly incorporated into the song. Quality is not perfect but is very good and acceptable to all but perfectionists. Associated recordings feature many interesting people: Al Jolson, Dennis Day, Ginny Simms, Frances Langford, Kate Smith, Marilyn Maxwell, Marlene Dietrich, Bob Hope, Mary Martin, Mildred Bailey, Dinah Shore, Alice Faye, Harry James, The Merry Macs and so many more. An excellent Sandy Hook production. The box is unique too! . . . a rough cut pine and hardboard creation stapled together but left open on one side. Supplied with a colourful wrapper!

4 CDs **READER'S DIGEST 136C THESE WERE OUR SONGS — THE LATE 30s** USA £37
Boxed

Disc 1: RB7-136-2/1 ACD4-5581 — I've Got A Pocketful Of Dreams
Disc 2: RB7-136-2/2 ACD4-5582 — Sweet Leilani (take B)
Pennies From Heaven (DLA463)
It's The Natural Thing To Do (take A)
Disc 3: RB7-136-2/3 ACD4-5583 — I'm An Old Cowhand
On Treasure Island (take B)
Red Sails In The Sunset
Disc 4: RB7-136-2/4 ACD4-5584 — Stardust (1939)

Playing Time: Approx. 250 minutes — Tracks: 84

A nice selection of Bing songs, not only those shown here but many more presented by other artists including many of the Swing bands, The Andrews Sisters, The Boswell Sisters, The Mills Brothers, 'Fats' Waller, The Ink Spots, Dorothy Lamour, Frances Langford, Bob Hope (of course) and many more. A nice set but a little roughness here and there in the sound.

4 CDs Boxed **READER'S DIGEST B92001 BB3/1-4 THE VERY BEST OF LOUIS ARMSTRONG** UK £48

Disc 3: THE GOOD BOOK and ARMSTRONG AND FRIENDS

Gone Fishin' — Muskrat Ramble
Way Down Yonder In New Orleans

Playing Time: 239 minutes — Tracks: 68

All three Bing tracks are readily available on other CDs and so this excellent set is mainly for Satchmo's friends. All tracks are from MCA or Polygram — the more popular Louis tracks.

4 CDs Boxed **TRING TFP008 100 OF THE GREATEST LOVE SONGS** UK Budget

Disc 2: VAR 030 — Come What May
Disc 4: VAR 032 — Everything I Have Is Yours
When The Red Roses Grow

Playing Time: Approx 260 minutes — Tracks: 100

At the time of writing this set is readily available at a variety of prices but it could well be unavailable when you read this. It is understood that copyright violations may have terminated the company's activities. The Bing titles are of interest but the sound is perhaps acceptable on the first two but is non-musical on the third. The CDs overall sound varies from excellent to very bad. The same company issued 'Bing Crosby — Everything I Have Is Yours' which contains the three tracks plus 26 more. The sound on most of them is just acceptable considering they are all reasonably rare tracks from radio.

CD **ASV LIVING ERA CD AJA 5087 HITS OF '40** UK £8

Only Forever — If I Had My Way
I Haven't Time To Be A Millionaire

Playing Time: 74 minutes — Tracks: 24

CD **ASV LIVING ERA CD AJA 5100 HITS OF '41** UK £8

San Antonio Rose — I'd Know You Anywhere
You Are My Sunshine

Playing Time: 67 minutes — Tracks: 22

Although not part of a set, these two releases are part of a series and so they are being reviewed together. There are other releases in this series which may contain Bing tracks. The titles are well selected and the sound is very good, especially on the first CD. Some of our younger members may find the surface noise intrudes a little on the second disc and it sounds as though 'I'd Know You Anywhere' was copied from a worn record — or possibly an 'XYZ' original. 'XYZ' stamped into the wax indicates on Brunswick records that the stamper had been prepared from a copy of the original record — a re-recording which in those days resulted in a considerable loss of quality. The other artists include vocalists and groups, dance bands and swing bands of the period. More than usual (about ½) from England including Al Bowlly singing 'When That Man Is Dead and Gone'. This was Al's very last recording. Two weeks later he was dead — killed in an air-raid on London.

Bing has a 'guest spot' on many other CD releases but it is now impossible to list everything. CDs devoted to Bing alone are becoming amazingly numerous, in part due to the activities of many fellow collectors. Apart from those listed it is known that several more CDs have been released in Japan. These are very expensive when they can be found in the UK. They include:-

1. Bing — A Musical Autobiography — MBCM 24003-6
2. Some Fine Old Chestnuts — MVCM-295
3. Holiday In Europe — MVCM-294

Hopefully, these will be to hand for the Christmas edition of BING but, as these are reissues of LPs, most of you will know the contents. Of course, there could be bonus tracks.

In this latest batch of CDs there must be something somewhere to make you happy.

Derek Parkes

"WHEN THE ORGAN PLAYED . . ."

Stan White has forwarded this picture from a 1960s newspaper/magazine in the USA and seeks further information about it. The picture shows Eddie Dunstedter at the Warren Wurlitzer console and we wonder if the other man is Murdo McKenzie. It seems that the photo was taken in the early 1950s and it was all to do with an experimental project being financed by Bing. I have a feeling that I've seen this picture in another Crosby magazine. Can anyone help?

RECORDED MUSIC SALES RISE TO TUNE OF $29bn

The international recorded music market grew 9.3 per cent to $28.7bn ($18.6bn) last year, according to figures released by the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry.

Compact disc unit sales rose 18 per cent to 1.15bn. While the cassette market grew by only 2.8 per cent, tapes remained the most popular music format with 1.55bn sold.

The cassette is a particularly popular format in eastern Europe. The number of cassettes sold in Poland rose to 18m last year from 3m in 1991 while in Russia, where the federation gathered data for the first time, 100m cassettes were sold in 1992.

Despite the continued popularity of vinyl in South Korea and China, worldwide sales of long-playing records fell 19.5 per cent to 130m.

Recorded music sales in the US showed the biggest growth last year with sales climbing 14.9 per cent to $8.9bn. In the UK, sales fell 1.6 per cent to just under $2bn.

BING IN THE THINKING MAN'S BAR

Bert Day sent us a copy of a small book "The Gordon's Guide To The World's Best Bars" and on a page devoted to Schumann's of Munich (once described as 'the thinking man's bar) we read:

". . . it appears to be awaiting the arrival of decorators. Its dark panelled walls are relieved by just two pictures, Edward Hopper's 'Nighthawks' and a print of Bing Crosby".

Would you believe it! Bing turns up in the unlikeliest places.

CD REVIEWS

Many reviewers of the CDs issued in recent months have been seen and we have pleasure in reproducing some of them below.

PEGGY LEE WITH BING CROSBY/ELLA FITZGERALD and BING CROSBY
Parrot PARCD 001 & 002

One of the quirks of jazz criticism is the reluctance of any writers and fans to give credit to singers who do not slavishly tie themselves to the purest of jazz performances. Thus, versatility is often punished. Moreover, you're not supposed to be white, too commercially successful, nor, incidentally, unless you also play an instrument, are you really supposed to be male!

Despite all this, Bing Crosby was one of the greatest of all jazz singers. Although he could and often did sing just about anything, he grew up in the world of Bix Beiderbecke and Hoagy Carmichael, and jazz was always what he loved best. (Unlike Sinatra, for instance; he always phrased the music, not the words). Short of Louis Armstrong or Billie Holliday perhaps, there is no better role-model for an aspiring jazz singer than Bing. If this sounds a little extreme, then these two superb CD's, culled from his radio show of the late 40's and early 50's certainly back me up. Alongside the greatest jazz vocalist of the last 50 years, he is never outclassed.

Volume one features Peggy Lee in the late 40's when she was still married to and writing with that fine guitarist Dave Barbour (who, I assume, is the featured guitar soloist). This is a fascinating period for Peggy Lee fans, for it was during this time that she gradually developed from being just a very good singer to an artiste who had 'found her own voice' and was on the verge of becoming one of the benchmarks alongside which all subsequent singers would have to be measured. Her inimitable sound, fine lyric-writing, wonderful phrasing, and, (especially in her banter with Bing Crosby) her personality and sense of humour are all well on display.

As for Ella Fitzgerald, what can one add to all that is being said on her 75th birthday? I, for one, am among those who believe that she is, paradoxically, a much better jazz singer when she is singing 'straight' than when she goes off into her pyrotechnics of scat. On this CD she is simply perfect, surprising us, moreover, by surrounding that marvellous sound with a breathy halo I don't normally associate with her singing. The result is a sort of vocal Ben Webster. Wonderful! It's fascinating to hear her duet with Bing on Basin St. Blues, and compare the result with the version Bing recorded a decade earlier with Ella's own idol, Connie Boswell. Personally, I wouldn't be without either.

As for the accompaniments, we have Bing's usual colleague John Scott Trotter and an orchestra obviously packed with the very best of session-men. The arrangements are super; at least one or two, I am sure, must be the work of Gordon Jenkins, a personal favourite of mine.

Finally, I should say that these hard-to-get tracks have been superbly transferred. You cannot believe that they came from airshot-accetates! So, a special commendation to Dave Bennett who is responsible. At over 75 minutes with odd solos from the likes of Joe Venuti, The Mills Bros., Ziggy Elman and a medley featuring Fred Astaire, both of these CD's (sold separately and both well documented by Geoff Milne) are a snip! If this is your sort of music, you really shouldn't miss either of them!

Earl Okin

The review came from the June edition of "Jazz on CD and Cassette."

BING CROSBY — ON TREASURE ISLAND
JSP Records CD 703

Everything about this CD contradicts the record companies' stated instructions that a CD MUST appeal to the High Street consumer first — and only then to the collector as an afterthought. Accountants for the companies think that way because they see that as the only way to profit from their discs, so it is quite refreshing to find that JSP Records are going against the trend to give us an assortment of Bing's work between 1934 and 1941. To be honest, there is little here other than the Crosby name to attract the casual buyer and it is only songs like DEEP PURPLE and IT'S ALWAYS YOU which are known to most of us. Others, such as AH! SWEET MYSTERY OF LIFE, are off-putting except to the Crosby purist who wants everything. IN TUNE subscriber Richard Hart worked hard on the selection of these titles, striving to find the sides that had previously been ignored for CD release, but I wish he had put a couple more up tempo items in as, with the exception of IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE NOW, CAMPTOWN RACES and one or two more mid tempos the CD is much of a muchness. I suppose it all depends on how you like your Bing — and perhaps from what period. There is no question that the later items on this CD offer the best of it and personally I was delighted to find THE SINGING HILLS there. This song is almost forgotten today but it is a strange fact that it was the longest No. 1 sheet music seller in the U.K. in 1940, staying at the top of our charts for no less than ten weeks. The transfers have been done by John R.T. Davies, a name long held in high esteem in transfer circles but even he can't completely remove the background hiss on some of the mid-thirties tracks. It is completed by an inlay card with notes by Fred Reynolds and full discography details of the recordings are given — so that is a bonus for a British release. This may be one for Crosby collectors particularly but it is a pleasant, easy listening CD that will reach some other ears.

Colin Morgan

Colin Morgan is of course Editor of that very informative magazine IN TUNE which we commend to our readers. Write to Colin at Caer Gofaint, Groes, Nr. Denbigh, Clwyd LL16 5YT for further details. An advert for the ICC was recently placed in the magazine.

JUDY GARDLAND and BING CROSBY — When You're Smiling

The Daily Telegraph of July 3rd carried a brief review of this new CD.

"A new series from the enterprising Parrot Productions has unearthed some pretty rare radio performances by Judy Garland and Bing Crosby. *When You're Smiling* (PARCD 003). A generous 76 minutes worth of solos and duets, the latter being the really curious stuff: Garland with that note of hysteria in her voice, and the oh-so-laid back Bing make an intriguing combination. Their joint efforts include *Hello Ma Baby, Call Me Up Some Rainy Afternoon, April In Paris* and *Isle of Capri.* An issue mainly for fanatics, but full of good swing."

Grateful acknowledgements to the various publications whose reviews we have reproduced. The Parrot CDs in particular have had a very good exposure on radio with Benny Green deserving a plaudit for his use of them. Benny also gave us a tremendous programme about Bing using the Autobiography set on July 11th. Full details in the next issue.

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE
28th ANNUAL DINNER/MEETING
Mansion House, Roundhay Park, Leeds
SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 26th 1993

3.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m.

A WARM AND CORDIAL INVITATION IS EXTENDED TO ALL OUR MEMBERS, PARTNERS AND FRIENDS TO ATTEND OUR ANNUAL DINNER AT THE MANSION HOUSE, ROUNDHAY PARK, LEEDS.

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MENU

Cream of Potato and Leek Soup

* * * * *

Medallions of Pork Loin wrapped in Smoked Bacon, Roasted and served with a Carameled Apple
Selection of Fresh Vegetables and Potatoes

* * * * *

Hot Treacle Sponge Pudding and Custard
(Summer alternative)
Olde English Trifle

* * * * *

Selection of English Cheese, Celery and Savoury Biscuits

* * * * *

Coffee wiith Cream and Wafer Mints

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WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR COMPANY

Copy date for next edition - 15 October 1993
All material to the Editor

We were never below par with Bing.

Big names prefer the comfort of other big names. Which is why people like Gary Cooper, Vivien Leigh, Bing Crosby, Errol Flynn, Gloria Swanson, Walt Disney and Lillian Gish entrusted their life assurance to Sun Life of Canada.

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